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LETTERS

ON THE

IMPROVEMENT

OF THE

MIND.

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IMPROVEMENT

OF THE

MIND,

ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY.

I CONSIDER AN HUMAN SOUL WITHOUT EDUCATION, LIKE MARBLE IN THE QUARRY, WHICH SHEWS NONE OF ITS INHERENT BEAUTIES TILL THE SKILL OF THE POLISHER FETCHES OUT THE COLOURS, MAKES THE SURFACE SHINE, AND DISCOVERS EVERY ORNAMENTAL CLOUD, SPOT, AND VEIN THAT RUNS THROUGH THE BODY OF IT. EDUCATION, AFTER THE SAME MANNER, WHEN IT WORKS UPON A NOBLE MIND, DRAWS OUT TO VIEW EVERY LATENT VIRTUE AND PERFECTION, WHICH WITHOUT SUCH HELPS ARE NEVER ABLE TO MAKE THEIR APPEARANCE.

ADDISON.

By Mrs. CHAPONE.

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TO

Mrs. MONTAGU.

MADAM,

I BELIEVE, you are perſuaded that I never entertained a thought of appearing in public, when the deſire of being uſeful to one dear child, in whom I take the tendereſt intereſt, induced me to write the following Letters: —perhaps it was the partiality of friendſhip, which ſo far biaſſed

your judgment as to make you think them capable of being more extenſively uſeful, and warmly to recommend the publication of them. Though this partiality could alone prevent your judgment from being conſidered as deciſive in favour of the work, it is more flattering to the writer than any literary fame; if, however, you will allow me to add, that ſome ſtrokes of your elegant pen have corrected theſe Letters, I may hope, they will be received with an attention, which will enſure a candid judgment from the reader, and perhaps

haps will enable them to make ſome uſeful impreſſions on thoſe, to whom they are now particularly offered.

They only, who know how your hours are employed, and of what important value they are to the good and happineſs of individuals, as well as to the delight and improvement of the public, can juſtly eſtimate my obligation to you for the time and conſideration you have beſtowed on this little work. As *you* have drawn it forth, I may claim a ſort of right

to

to the ornament and protection of your name, and to the privilege of publicly profeſſing myſelf, with the higheſt eſteem,

MADAM,

your much obliged friend,

and moſt obedient

humble ſervant,

HESTER CHAPONE.

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Concluſion.

LETTER I.

MY DEAREST NIECE,

THOUGH you are ſo happy as to have parents, who are both capable and deſirous of giving you all proper inſtruction, yet I, who love you ſo tenderly, cannot help fondly wiſhing to contribute ſomething, if poſſible, to your improvement and welfare: And, as I am ſo far ſeparated from you, that it is only by pen and ink I can offer you my ſentiments, I will hope that your attention may be engaged, by ſeeing on paper, from the hand of one of your warmeſt friends, Truths of the higheſt importance, which, though you may not find new, can never be too deeply engraven on your mind. Some of them perhaps may make no great impreſſion at preſent, and yet may ſo far gain a place in your memory as readily to return to your

thoughts when occaſion recalls them. And, if you pay me the compliment of preſerving my letters, you may poſſibly re-peruſe them at ſome future period, when concurring circumſtances may give them additional weight; —and thus they may prove more effectual than the ſame things ſpoken in converſation. But however this may prove, I cannot reſiſt the deſire of trying to be in ſome degree uſeful to you, on your ſetting out in a life of trial and difficulty; your ſucceſs in which muſt determine your fate for ever.

Hitherto you have "thought as a child, "and underſtood as a child;" but it is time "to put away childiſh things."—You are now in your fifteenth year, and muſt ſoon act for yourſelf; therefore it is high time to ſtore your mind with thoſe principles, which muſt direct your conduct, and fix your character. If you deſire to live in peace and honour, in favour with God and man, and to die in the glorious hope of riſing from the grave to a life of endleſs happineſs—if theſe things appear worthy your ambition, you muſt ſet out in earneſt in the purſuit of

them. Virtue and happineſs are not attained by chance, nor by a cold and languid approbation; they muſt be ſought with ardour, attended to with diligence, and every aſſiſtance muſt be eagerly embraced that may enable you to obtain them. Conſider, that good and evil are now before you, that, if you do not heartily chooſe and love the one, you muſt undoubtedly be the wretched victim of the other. Your trial is now begun; you muſt either become one of the glorious *children* of *God*, who are to rejoice in his love for ever, or a *child* of *deſtruction*—miſerable in this life, and puniſhed with eternal death hereafter. Surely, you will be impreſſed by ſo awful a ſituation! you will earneſtly pray to be directed into that road of life, which leads to excellence and happineſs; and, you will be thankful to every kind hand that is held out, to ſet you forward in your journey.

The firſt ſtep muſt be to awaken your mind to a ſenſe of the importance of the taſk before you; which is no leſs than to bring your frail nature to that degree of Chriſtian perfection, which is to qualify it for

immortality, and, without which, it is neceſſarily incapable of happineſs; for, it is a truth never to be forgotten, that God has annexed happineſs to virtue, and miſery to vice, by the unchangeable nature of things; and that, a wicked being (while he continues ſuch) is in a natural incapacity of enjoying happineſs, even with the concurrence of all thoſe outward circumſtances, which in a virtuous mind would produce it.

As there are degrees of virtue and vice, ſo are there of reward and puniſhment, both here and hereafter: But, let not my deareſt Niece aim only at eſcaping the dreadful doom of the wicked—let your deſires take a nobler flight, and aſpire after thoſe tranſcendent honours, and that brighter crown of glory, which await thoſe who have excelled in virtue; and, let the animating thought, that every ſecret effort to gain his favour is noted by your all-ſeeing judge, who will, with infinite goodneſs, proportion your reward to your labours, excite every faculty of your ſoul to pleaſe and ſerve him. To this end, you muſt *inform your underſtanding* what you ought to

to *believe*, and to *do*.—You muſt *correct* and *purify* your *heart*; cheriſh and improve all its good affections; and continually mortify and ſubdue thoſe that are evil.—You muſt *form* and *govern* your *temper* and *manners*, according to the laws of benevolence and juſtice; and qualify yourſelf, by all means in your power, for an *uſeful* and *agreeable* member of ſociety. All this you ſee is no light buſineſs, nor can it be performed without a ſincere and earneſt application of the mind, as to its great and conſtant object. When once you conſider life, and the duties of life, in this manner, you will liſten eagerly to the voice of inſtruction and admonition, and ſeize every opportunity of improvement; every uſeful hint will be laid up in your heart, and your chief delight will be in thoſe perſons, and thoſe books, from which you can learn true wiſdom.

The only ſure foundation of human virtue is Religion, and the foundation and firſt principle of religion is the belief of the one only God, and a juſt ſenſe of his attributes. This you will think you have learn'd long ſince,

and poſſeſs in common with almoſt every human creature in this enlightened age and nation; but, believe me, it is leſs common than you imagine, to believe in the true God—that is, to form ſuch a notion of the Deity as is agreeable to truth, and conſiſtent with thoſe infinite perfections, which all profeſs to aſcribe to him. To form worthy notions of the ſupreme Being, as far as we are capable, is eſſential to true religion and morality; for as it is our duty to imitate thoſe qualities of the Divinity, which are imitable by us, ſo is it neceſſary we ſhould know what they are, and fatal to miſtake them. Can thoſe who think of God with ſervile dread and terror, as of a gloomy tyrant, armed with almighty power to torment and deſtroy them, be ſaid to believe in the true God?—in that God who, the ſcriptures ſay, is love?—The kindeſt and beſt of Beings, who made all creatures in bountiful goodneſs, that he might communicate to them ſome portion of his own unalterable happineſs!—who condeſcends to ſtile himſelf our Father! and, who pitieth us, as a father pitieth his own children!—Can thoſe who

who expect to please God by cruelty to themselves, or to their fellow-creatures—by horrid punishments of their own bodies for the sin of their souls—or, by more horrid persecution of others for difference of opinion, be called true believers? Have they not set up another God in their own minds, who rather resembles the worst of beings than the best? —Nor do those act on surer principles who think to gain the favour of God by senseless enthusiasm and frantic raptures, more like the wild excesses of the most depraved human love, than that reasonable adoration, that holy reverential love, which is due to the pure and holy Father of the universe. Those likewise, who murmur against his providence and repine under the restraint of his commands, cannot firmly believe him infinitely wise and good. If we are not disposed to trust him for future events, to banish fruitless anxiety, and to believe that all things work together for good to those that love him, surely we do not really believe in the God of mercy and truth. If we wish to avoid all remembrance of him, all communion with him,

as much as we dare, ſurely we do not believe him to be the ſource of joy and comfort, the diſpenſer of all good.

How lamentable it is, that ſo few hearts ſhould feel the pleaſures of real piety!—that prayer and thankſgiving ſhould be performed, as they too often are, not with joy, and love, and gratitude; but, with cold indifference, melancholy dejection, or ſecret horror!—it is true, we are all ſuch frail and ſinful creatures, that we juſtly fear to have offended our gracious father; but, let us remember the condition of his forgiveneſs: If you have ſinned —"ſin no more." He is ready to receive you whenever you ſincerely turn to him—and, he is ready to aſſiſt you, when you do but deſire to obey him. Let your devotion then be the language of filial love and gratitude; confide to this kindeſt of fathers every want, and every wiſh of your heart;—but ſubmit them all to his will, and freely offer him the diſpoſal of yourſelf, and of all your affairs. Thank him for his benefits, and even for his puniſhments—convinced that theſe alſo are benefits, and mercifully deſigned for your good.

good. Implore his direction in all difficulties; his aſſiſtance in all trials; his comfort and ſupport in ſickneſs or affliction; his reſtraining grace in the time of proſperity and joy. Do not perſiſt in deſiring what his providence denies you; but be aſſured it is not good for you. Refuſe not any thing he allots you, but embrace it as the beſt and propereſt for you. Can you do leſs to your heavenly Father than what your duty to an earthly one requires?—If you were to aſk permiſſion of your father, to do, or to have any thing you deſire, and he ſhould refuſe it to you, would you obſtinately perſiſt in ſetting your heart upon it, notwithſtanding his prohibition? would you not rather ſay, My father is wiſer than I am; he loves me, and would not deny my requeſt, if it was fit to be granted; I will therefore baniſh the thought, and chearfully acquieſce in his will?—How much rather ſhould this be ſaid of our heavenly Father, whoſe wiſdom cannot be miſtaken, and whoſe bountiful kindneſs is infinite!—Love him therefore in the ſame manner you love your earthly parents, but in a much higher degree

—in

—in the higheſt your nature is capable of. Forget not to dedicate yourſelf to his ſervice every day; to implore his forgiveneſs of your faults, and his protection from evil, every night: and this not merely in formal words, unaccompanied by any act of the mind, but "in ſpirit and in truth;" in grateful love, and humble adoration. Nor let theſe ſtated periods of worſhip be your only communication with him; accuſtom yourſelf to think often of him, in all your waking hours;—to contemplate his wiſdom and power, in the works of his hands—to acknowledge his goodneſs in every object of uſe or of pleaſure—to delight in giving him praiſe in your inmoſt heart, in the midſt of every innocent gratification—in the livelieſt hour of ſocial enjoyment. You cannot conceive, if you have not experienced, how much ſuch ſilent acts of gratitude and love will enhance every pleaſure; nor what ſweet ſerenity and chearfulneſs ſuch reflections will diffuſe over your mind. On the other hand, when you are ſuffering pain or ſorrow, when you are confined to an unpleaſant ſituation, or engaged in

in a painful duty, how will it ſupport and animate you, to refer yourſelf to your almighty Father!—to be aſſured that he knows your ſtate and your intentions; that no effort of virtue is loſt in his ſight, nor the leaſt of your actions or ſufferings diſregarded or forgotten!—that his hand is ever over you, to ward off every real evil, which is not the effect of your own ill conduct, and to relieve every ſuffering that is not uſeful to your future well-being!

You ſee, my dear, that true devotion is not a melancholy ſentiment that depreſſes the ſpirits, and excludes the ideas of pleaſure, which youth is ſo fond of: on the contrary, there is nothing ſo friendly to joy, ſo productive of true pleaſure, ſo peculiarly ſuited to the warmth and innocence of a youthful heart. Do not therefore think it too ſoon to turn your mind to God; but offer him the firſt fruits of your underſtanding and affections: and be aſſured, that the more you increaſe in love to him, and delight in his laws, the more you will increaſe in happineſs, in excellence, and honour;—that, in proportion as you improve

prove in true piety, you will become dear and amiable to your fellow creatures; contented and peaceful in yourself; and qualified to enjoy the best blessings of this life, as well as to inherit the glorious promise of immortality.

Thus far I have spoken of the first principles of all religion: namely, belief in God, worthy notions of his attributes, and suitable affections towards him—which will naturally excite a sincere desire of obedience. But, before you can obey his will, you must know what that will is; you must enquire in what manner he has declared it, and where you may find those laws, which must be the rule of your actions.

The great laws of morality are indeed written in our hearts, and may be discovered by reason; but our reason is of slow growth; very unequally dispensed to different persons; liable to error, and confined within very narrow limits in all. If, therefore, God has vouchsafed to grant a particular revelation of his will—if he has been so unspeakably gracious, as to send his son into the world to reclaim mankind from error and wickedness—

to

to die for our ſins—and to teach us the way to eternal life—ſurely it becomes us to receive his precepts with the deepeſt reverence; to love and prize them above all things; and to ſtudy them conſtantly, with an earneſt deſire to conform our thoughts, our words, and actions to them.

As you advance in years and underſtanding, I hope you will be able to examine for yourſelf the evidences of the Chriſtian religion, and be convinced, on rational grounds, of its divine authority. At preſent, ſuch enquiries would demand more ſtudy, and greater powers of reaſoning, than your age admits of. It is your part therefore, till you are capable of underſtanding the proofs, to believe your parents and teachers, that the holy ſcriptures are writings inſpired by God, containing a true hiſtory of facts, in which we are deeply concerned—a true recital of the laws given by God to Moſes, and of the precepts of our bleſſed Lord and Saviour, delivered from his own mouth to his diſciples, and repeated and enlarged upon in the edifying epiſtles of his Apoſtles—who were men choſen from amongſt

thoſe, who had the advantage of converſing with our Lord, to bear witneſs of his miracles and reſurrection—and who, after his aſcenſion, were aſſiſted and inſpired by the Holy Ghoſt. This ſacred volume muſt be the rule of your life. In it you will find all truths neceſſary to be believed; and plain and eaſy directions, for the practice of every duty: Your Bible then muſt be your chief ſtudy and delight: but, as it contains many various kinds of writing—ſome parts obſcure and difficult of interpretation, others plain and intelligible to the meaneſt capacity—I would chiefly recommend to your frequent peruſal ſuch parts of the ſacred writings as are moſt adapted to your underſtanding, and moſt neceſſary for your inſtruction. Our Saviour's precepts were ſpoken to the common people amongſt the Jews; and were therefore given in a manner eaſy to be underſtood, and equally ſtriking and inſtructive to the learned and unlearned: for the moſt ignorant may comprehend them, whilſt the wiſeſt muſt be charmed and awed, by the beautiful and majeſtic ſimplicity with which they are expreſſed. Of the

ſame

ſame kind are the Ten Commandments, delivered by God to Moſes; which, as they were deſigned for univerſal laws, are worded in the moſt conciſe and ſimple manner, yet with a majeſty, which commands our utmoſt reverence.

I think you will receive great pleaſure, as well as improvement, from the hiſtorical books of the Old Teſtament—provided you read them as an hiſtory, in a regular courſe, and keep the thread of it in your mind, as you go on. I know of none, true or fictitious, that is equally wonderful, intereſting, and affecting; or that is told in ſo ſhort and ſimple a manner as this, which is, of all hiſtories, the moſt authentic.

In my next letter, I will give you ſome brief directions, concerning the method and courſe I wiſh you to purſue, in reading the holy ſcriptures. May you be enabled to make the beſt uſe of this moſt precious gift of God —this ſacred treaſury of knowledge! May you read the Bible, not as a taſk, nor as the dull employment of that day only in which you are forbidden more lively entertainments—

but,

but, with a ſincere and ardent deſire of inſtruction; with that love and delight in God's word, which the holy Pſalmiſt ſo pathetically felt, and deſcribed, and which is the natural conſequence of loving God and virtue!— Though I ſpeak this of the Bible in general, I would not be underſtood to mean, that every part of the volume is equally intereſting. I have already ſaid, that it conſiſts of various matter, and various kinds of books, which muſt be read with different views and ſentiments. The having ſome general notion of what you are to expect from each book may poſſibly help you to underſtand them, and heighten your reliſh of them. I ſhall treat you as if you were perfectly new to the whole; for ſo I wiſh you to conſider yourſelf; becauſe the time and manner, in which children uſually read the Bible, are very ill calculated to make them really acquainted with it; and too many people who have read it thus, without underſtanding it in their youth, ſatisfy themſelves that they know enough of it, and never afterwards ſtudy it with attention, when they come to a maturer age.

Adieu,

Adieu, my beloved Niece! If the feelings of your heart, whilſt you read my letters, correſpond with thoſe of mine, whilſt I write them, I ſhall not be without the advantage of your partial affection, to give weight to my advice; for believe me, my own dear girl, my heart and eyes overflow with tenderneſs, while I tell you, with how warm and earneſt prayers for your happineſs here, and hereafter, I ſubſcribe myſelf

your faithful friend
and moſt affectionate Aunt.

LETTER II.

I NOW proceed to give my dear niece ſome ſhort ſketches of the matter contained in the different books of the Bible, and of the courſe in which they ought to be read.

The firſt book, GENESIS, contains the moſt grand, and, to us, the moſt intereſting events, that ever happened in the univerſe:—The creation of the world, and of man:—The de-

plorable fall of man, from his firſt ſtate of excellence and bliſs, to the diſtreſſed condition in which we ſee all his deſcendants continue:—The ſentence of death pronounced on Adam, and on all his race—with the reviving promiſe of that deliverance, which has ſince been wrought for us by our bleſſed Saviour:—The account of the early ſtate of the world:—Of the univerſal deluge:—The diviſion of mankind into different nations and languages:—The ſtory of Abraham, the founder of the Jewiſh people; whoſe unſhaken faith and obedience, under the ſevereſt trial human nature could ſuſtain, obtained ſuch favour in the ſight of God, that he vouchſafed to ſtile him his friend, and promiſed to make of his poſterity a great nation; and that in his ſeed—that is in one of his deſcendants—all the kingdoms of the earth ſhould be bleſſed: this, you will eaſily ſee, refers to the Meſſiah, who was to be the bleſſing and deliverance of all nations. It is amazing that the Jews, poſſeſſing this prophecy among many others, ſhould have been ſo blinded by prejudice, as to have expected, from this great

perſonage, only a temporal deliverance of their own nation from the ſubjection to which they were reduced under the Romans: it is equally amazing, that ſome Chriſtians ſhould, even now, confine the bleſſed effects of his appearance upon earth, to this or that particular ſect or profeſſion, when he is ſo clearly and emphatically deſcribed as the Saviour of the whole world.—The ſtory of Abraham's proceeding to ſacrifice his only ſon at the command of God, is affecting in the higheſt degree, and ſets forth a pattern of unlimited reſignation, that every one ought to imitate, in thoſe trials of obedience under temptation, or of acquieſcence under afflicting diſpenſations, which fall to their lot: of this we may be aſſured, that our trials will be always proportioned to the powers afforded us: If we have not Abraham's ſtrength of mind, neither ſhall we be called upon to lift the bloody knife againſt the boſom of an only child; but, if the almighty arm ſhould be lifted up againſt him, we muſt be ready to reſign him, and all we hold dear, to the divine will.—This action of Abraham has been cenſured by ſome, who do not attend

to the diſtinction between obedience to a ſpecial command, and the deteſtably cruel ſacrifices of the Heathens, who ſometimes voluntarily, and without any divine injunctions, offered up their own children, under the notion of appeaſing the anger of their gods. An abſolute command from God himſelf—as in the caſe of Abraham—entirely alters the moral nature of the action; ſince he, and he only, has a perfect right over the lives of his creatures, and may appoint whom he will, either angel or man, to be his inſtrument of deſtruction. That it was really the voice of God, which pronounced the command, and not a deluſion, might be made certain to Abraham's mind, by means we do not comprehend, but which we know to be within the power of *him* who made our ſouls as well as bodies, and who can controul and direct every faculty of the human mind: and we may be aſſured, that if he was pleaſed to reveal himſelf ſo miraculouſly, he would not leave a poſſibility of doubting whether it was a real or an imaginary revelation: thus the ſacrifice of Abraham appears to be clear of all ſuperſtition, and remains the nobleſt

inſtance of religious faith and ſubmiſſion that was ever given by a mere man: we cannot wonder that the bleſſings beſtowed on him for it ſhould have been extended to his poſterity. —This book proceeds with the hiſtory of Iſaac, which becomes very intereſting to us, from the touching ſcene I have mentioned—and ſtill more ſo, if we conſider him as the type of our Saviour: it recounts his marriage with Rebecca —the birth and hiſtory of his two ſons, Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes, and Eſau, the father of the Edomites or Idumeans—the exquiſitely affecting ſtory of Joſeph and his brethren—and of his tranſplanting the Iſraelites into Egypt, who there multiplied to a great nation.

In EXODUS, you read of a ſeries of wonders, wrought by the Almighty, to reſcue the oppreſſed Iſraelites from the cruel tyranny of the Egyptians, who, having firſt received them as gueſts, by degrees reduced them to a ſtate of ſlavery. By the moſt peculiar mercies and exertions in their favour, God prepared his choſen people to receive, with reverent and obedient hearts, the ſolemn reſtitution of thoſe

primitive laws, which probably he had revealed to Adam and his immediate deſcendants, or which, at leaſt, he had made known by the dictates of conſcience, but which, time, and the degeneracy of mankind, had much obſcured. This important revelation was made to them in the Wilderneſs of Sinah: there, aſſembled before the burning mountain, ſurrounded "with blackneſs, and darkneſs, and "tempeſt," they heard the awful voice of God pronounce the eternal law, impreſſing it on their hearts, with circumſtances of terror, but without thoſe encouragements and thoſe excellent promiſes, which were afterwards offered to mankind by Jeſus Chriſt. Thus were the great laws of morality reſtored to the Jews, and through them tranſmitted to other nations; and by that means a great reſtraint was oppoſed to the torrent of vice and impiety, which began to prevail over the world.

To thoſe moral precepts, which are of perpetual and univerſal obligation, were ſuperadded, by the miniſtration of Moſes, many peculiar inſtitutions, wiſely adapted to different ends—either, to fix the memory of thoſe paſt deli-

deliverances which were figurative of a future and far greater ſalvation—to place inviolable barriers between the Jews and the idolatrous nations, by whom they were ſurrounded—or, to be the civil law, by which the community was to be governed.

To conduct this ſeries of events, and to eſtabliſh theſe laws with his people, God raiſed up that great prophet Moſes, whoſe faith and piety enabled him to undertake and execute the moſt arduous enterprizes, and to purſue, with unabated zeal, the welfare of his countrymen; even in the hour of death, this generous ardour ſtill prevailed: his laſt moments were employed in fervent prayers for their proſperity, and, in rapturous gratitude, for the glimpſe vouchſafed him of a Saviour, far greater than himſelf, whom God would one day raiſe up to his people.

Thus did Moſes, by the excellency of his faith, obtain a glorious pre-eminence among the ſaints and prophets in heaven; while, on earth, he will be ever revered, as the firſt of thoſe benefactors to mankind, whoſe labours

for the public good have endeared their memory to all ages.

The next book is LEVITICUS, which contains little beſides the laws for the peculiar ritual obſervance of the Jews, and therefore affords no great inſtruction to us now; you may paſs it over entirely: and, for the ſame reaſon, you may omit the firſt eight chapters of NUMBERS. The reſt of Numbers is chiefly a continuation of the hiſtory, with ſome ritual laws.

In DEUTERONOMY, Moſes makes a recapitulation of the foregoing hiſtory, with zealous exhortations to the people, faithfully to worſhip and obey that God, who had worked ſuch amazing wonders for them: he promiſes them the nobleſt temporal bleſſings, if they prove obedient, and adds the moſt awful and ſtriking denunciations againſt them, if they rebel, or forſake the true God. I have before obſerved, that the ſanctions of the Moſaic law were *temporal* rewards and puniſhments, thoſe of the New Teſtament are *eternal:* Theſe laſt, as they are ſo infinitely more forcible than the

firſt,

firſt, were reſerved for the laſt, beſt gift to mankind—and were revealed by the Meſſiah, in the fulleſt and cleareſt manner. Moſes, in this book, directs the method in which the Iſraelites were to deal with the ſeven nations, whom they were appointed to puniſh for their profligacy and idolatry; and whoſe land they were to poſſeſs, when they had driven out the old inhabitants. He gives them excellent laws, civil as well as religious, which were ever after the ſtanding municipal laws of that people. --This book concludes with Moſes' ſong and death.

The book of JOSHUA contains the conqueſts of the Iſraelites over the ſeven nations, and their eſtabliſhment in the promiſed land. —Their treatment of theſe conquered nations muſt appear to you very cruel and unjuſt, if you conſider it as their own act, unauthorized by a poſitive command: but they had the moſt abſolute injunctions, not to ſpare theſe corrupt people—"to make no covenant with them, "nor ſhew mercy to them, but utterly to de-"ſtroy them." And the reaſon is given—"leſt "they ſhould turn away the Iſraelites from "following

" following the Lord, that they might ſerve " other Gods *." The children of Iſrael are to be conſidered as inſtruments in the hand of the Lord, to puniſh thoſe, whoſe idolatry and wickedneſs had deſervedly brought deſtruction on them: this example, therefore, cannot be pleaded in behalf of cruelty, or bring any imputation on the character of the Jews. With regard to other cities, which did not belong to theſe ſeven nations, they were directed to deal with them, according to the common law of arms at that time. If the city ſubmitted, it became tributary, and the people were ſpared; if it reſiſted, the men were to be ſlain, but the women and children ſaved †. Yet, though the crime of cruelty cannot be juſtly laid to their charge on this occaſion, you will obſerve in the courſe of their hiſtory, many things recorded of them, very different from what you would expect from the choſen people of God, if you ſuppoſed them ſelected on account of their own merit: their national character was by no means amiable; and, we are repeatedly told, that they were not choſen for their ſupe-

* Deut. chap. ii. † Ibid. chap. xx.

rior

rior righteouſneſs — " for they were a ſtiff-
" necked people, and provoked the Lord with
" their rebellions from the day they left E-
" gypt."—" You have been rebellious againſt
" the Lord, ſays Moſes, from the day that I
" knew you *."—And he vehemently exhorts them, not to flatter themſelves that their ſucceſs was, in any degree, owing to their own merits. They were appointed to be the ſcourge of other nations, whoſe crimes rendered them fit objects of divine chaſtiſement. For the ſake of righteous Abraham, their founder, and perhaps for many other wiſe reaſons, undiſcovered to us, they were ſelected from a world over-run with idolatry, to preſerve upon earth the pure worſhip of the one only God, and to be honoured with the birth of the Meſſiah amongſt them. For this end, they were precluded by divine command, from mixing with any other people, and defended by a great number of peculiar rites and obſervances, from falling into the corrupt worſhip practiſed by their neighbours.

The book of JUDGES, in which you will

* Deut. chap. ix. ver. 24.

find

find the affecting ſtories of Sampſon and of Jephtha, carries on the hiſtory from the death of Joſhua, about two hundred and fifty years; but, the facts are not told in the times in which they happened, which makes ſome confuſion; and it will be neceſſary to conſult the marginal dates and notes, as well as the index, in order to get any clear idea of the ſucceſſion of events, during that period.

The hiſtory then proceeds regularly through the two books of SAMUEL, and thoſe of KINGS: nothing can be more intereſting and entertaining than the reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon: but, after the death of Solomon, when ten tribes revolted from his ſon Rehoboam, and became a ſeparate kingdom, you will find ſome difficulty in underſtanding diſtinctly the hiſtories of the two kingdoms of Iſrael and Judah, which are blended together, and, by the likeneſs of the names, and other particulars, will be apt to confound your mind, without great attention to the different threads thus carried on together: The Index here will be of great uſe to you. The ſecond book of Kings concludes with the Babyloniſh captivity,

588 years before Chriſt—till which time, the kingdom of Judah had deſcended uninterruptedly in the line of David.

The firſt book of CHRONICLES begins with a genealogy from Adam, through all the tribes of Iſrael and Judah; and the remainder is the ſame hiſtory, which is contained in the books of Kings, with little or no variation, till the ſeparation of the ten tribes: From that period, it proceeds with the hiſtory of the kingdom of Judah alone, and gives therefore a more regular and clear account of the affairs of Judah than the book of Kings. You may paſs over the firſt book of Chronicles, and the nine firſt chapters of the ſecond book: but, by all means, read the remaining chapters, as they will give you more clear and diſtinct ideas of the hiſtory of Judah than that you read in the ſecond book of Kings. The ſecond of Chronicles ends, like the ſecond of Kings, with the Babyloniſh captivity.

You muſt purſue the hiſtory in the book of EZRA, which gives an account of the return of ſome of the Jews, on the edict of Cyrus, and of the rebuilding the Lord's temple.

NEHEMIAH

NEHEMIAH carries on the hiſtory, for about twelve years, when he himſelf was governor of Jeruſalem, with authority to rebuild the walls, &c.

The ſtory of ESTHER is prior in time to that of Ezra and Nehemiah; as you will ſee by the marginal dates; however, as it happened during the ſeventy years captivity, and is a kind of epiſode, it may be read in its own place.

This is the laſt of the canonical books that is properly hiſtorical; and I would therefore adviſe, that you paſs over what follows, till you have continued the hiſtory through the apocryphal books.

The ſtory of JOB is probably very ancient, though that is a point upon which learned men have differed: It is dated, however, 1520 years before Chriſt: I believe it is uncertain by whom it was written: many parts of it are obſcure, but it is well worth ſtudying, for the extreme beauty of the poetry, and for the noble and ſublime devotion it contains. The ſubject of the diſpute, between Job and his pretended friends, ſeems to be, whether the providence

of

of God diſtributes the rewards and puniſhments of this life, in exact proportion to the merit or demerit of each individual. His antagoniſts ſuppoſe that it does; and therefore infer from Job's uncommon calamities that, notwithſtanding his apparent righteouſneſs, he was in reality a grievous ſinner: They aggravate his ſuppoſed guilt, by the imputation of hypocriſy, and call upon him to confeſs it, and to acknowledge the juſtice of his puniſhment. Job aſſerts his own innocence and virtue in the moſt pathetic manner, yet does not preſume to accuſe the ſupreme Being of injuſtice. Elihu attempts to arbitrate the matter, by alledging the impoſſibility that ſo frail and ignorant a creature as man ſhould comprehend the ways of the Almighty, and, therefore, condemns the unjuſt and cruel inference the three friends had drawn from the ſufferings of Job. He alſo blames Job for the preſumption of acquitting himſelf of all iniquity, ſince the beſt of men are not pure in the ſight of God—but all have ſomething to repent of; and he adviſes him to make this uſe of his afflictions. At laſt, by a bold figure of poetry, the ſupreme

preme Being himſelf is introduced, ſpeaking from the whirlwind, and ſilencing them all by the moſt ſublime diſplay of his own power, magnificence, and wiſdom, and of the comparative littleneſs and ignorance of man.—This indeed is the only concluſion of the argument which could be drawn, at a time when life and immortality were not yet brought to light. A future retribution is the only ſatisfactory ſolution of the difficulty ariſing from the ſufferings of good people in this life.

Next follow THE PSALMS, with which you cannot be too converſant. If you have any taſte, either for poetry or devotion, they will be your delight, and will afford you a continual feaſt. The Bible tranſlation is far better than that uſed in the Common-prayer Book; and will often give you the ſenſe, when the other is obſcure. In this, as well as in all other parts of the ſcripture, you muſt be careful always to conſult the margin, which gives you the corrections made ſince the laſt tranſlation, and is generally preferable to the words of the text. I would wiſh you to ſelect ſome of the Pſalms that pleaſe you beſt, and get them

them by heart; or, at leaſt, make yourſelf miſtreſs of the ſentiments contained in them: Dr. Delany's Life of David will ſhew you the occaſions on which ſeveral of them were compoſed, which add much to their beauty and propriety, and by comparing them with the events of David's life, you will greatly enhance your pleaſure in them. Never did the ſpirit of true piety breathe more ſtrongly than in theſe divine ſongs; which, being added to a rich vein of poetry, makes them more captivating to my heart and imagination than any thing I ever read. You will conſider how great diſadvantages any poem muſt ſuſtain from being rendered literally into proſe, and then imagine how beautiful theſe muſt be in the original. May you be enabled, by reading them frequently, to transfuſe into your own breaſt that holy flame which inſpired the writer!—To delight in the Lord, and in his laws, like the Pſalmiſt—to rejoice in him always, and to think "one day in his "courts better than a thouſand!"—But, may you eſcape the heart-piercing ſorrow of ſuch repentance as that of David—by avoiding ſin,

which humbled this unhappy king to the duſt —and which coſt him ſuch bitter anguiſh, as it is impoſſible to read of without being moved. Not all the pleaſures of the moſt proſperous ſinner could counterbalance the hundredth part of thoſe ſenſations, deſcribed in his penitential Pſalms—and which muſt be the portion of every man, who has fallen from a religious ſtate into ſuch crimes, when once he recovers a ſenſe of religion and virtue, and is brought to a real hatred of ſin: however available ſuch repentance may be to the ſafety and happineſs of the ſoul after death, it is a ſtate of ſuch exquiſite ſuffering here, that one cannot be enough ſurpriſed at the folly of thoſe, who indulge in ſin, with the hope of living to make their peace with God, by repentance. Happy are they who preſerve their innocence unſullied by any great or wilful crimes, and who have only the common failings of humanity to repent of; theſe are ſufficiently mortifying to a heart deeply ſmitten with the love of virtue and with the deſire of perfection.—There are many very ſtriking prophecies of the Meſſiah, in theſe divine

ſongs;

ſongs; particularly in Pſalm xxii: ſuch may be found ſcattered up and down almoſt throughout the Old Teſtament. To bear teſtimony to *him* is the great and ultimate end, for which the ſpirit of prophecy was beſtowed on the ſacred writers:—but this will appear more plainly to you, when you enter on the ſtudy of prophecy, which you are now much too young to undertake.

The PROVERBS and ECCLESIASTES are rich ſtores of wiſdom; from which I wiſh you to adopt ſuch maxims as may be of infinite uſe, both to your temporal and eternal intereſt. But, detached ſentences are a kind of reading not proper to be continued long at a time; a few of them well choſen and digeſted, will do you much more ſervice, than to read half a dozen chapters together; in this reſpect they are directly oppoſite to the hiſtorical books, which, if not read in continuation, can hardly be underſtood, or retained to any purpoſe.

The SONG OF SOLOMON is a fine poem—but its myſtical reference to religion lies too deep for a common underſtanding: if you

read it therefore, it will be rather as matter of curioſity than of edification.

Next follow the PROPHECIES, which though highly deſerving the greateſt attention and ſtudy, I think you had better omit for ſome years, and then read them with a good expoſition; as they are much too difficult for you to underſtand, without aſſiſtance. Dr. Newton on the Prophecies will help you much, whenever you undertake this ſtudy —which, you ſhould by all means do, when your underſtanding is ripe enough; becauſe one of the main proofs of our religion reſts on the teſtimony of the prophecies; and they are very frequently quoted, and referred to, in the New Teſtament: beſides, the ſublimity of the language and ſentiments, through all the diſadvantages of antiquity and tranſlation, muſt, in very many paſſages, ſtrike every perſon of taſte; and the excellent moral and religious precepts found in them muſt be uſeful to all.

Though I have ſpoken of theſe books, in the order in which they ſtand, I repeat that they are not to be read in that order—but that

that the thread of the hiſtory is to be purſued, from Nehemiah, to the firſt book of the MACCABEES, in the Apocrypha; taking care to obſerve the Chronology regularly, by referring to the Index, which ſupplies the deficiencies of this hiſtory, from *Joſephus's Antiquities of the Jews*. The firſt of Maccabees carries on the ſtory, till within 195 years of our Lord's circumciſion: The ſecond book is the ſame narrative, written by a different hand, and does not bring the hiſtory ſo forward as the firſt; ſo that it may be entirely omitted, unleſs you have the curioſity to read ſome particulars of the heroic conſtancy of the Jews, under the tortures inflicted by their heathen conquerors, with a few other things not mentioned in the firſt book.

You muſt then connect the hiſtory by the help of the Index, which will give you brief heads of the changes that happened in the ſtate of the Jews, from this time, till the birth of the Meſſiah.

The other books of the Apocrypha, though not admitted as of ſacred authority,

have many things well worth your attention; particularly the admirable book called Ecclesiasticus, and the Book of Wisdom. But, in the courſe of reading which I adviſe, theſe muſt be omitted till after you have gone through the Goſpels and Acts, that you may not loſe the hiſtorical thread.—I muſt reſerve however what I have to ſay to you, concerning the New Teſtament, to another letter.

Adieu, my dear!

LETTER III.

MY DEAREST NIECE,

WE come now to that part of ſcripture, which is the moſt important of all; and which you muſt make your conſtant ſtudy, not only till you are thoroughly acquainted with it, but all your life long; becauſe, how often ſoever repeated, it is impoſſible to read the life and death of our bleſſed Saviour, without renewing and increaſing

creaſing in our hearts that love, and reverence, and gratitude towards him, which is ſo juſtly due for all he did, and ſuffered, for us! Every word that fell from his lips is more precious than all the treaſures of the earth; for his "are the words of eternal "life!" They muſt therefore be laid up in your heart, and conſtantly referred to, on all occaſions, as the rule and direction of all your actions; particularly thoſe very comprehenſive moral precepts he has graciouſly left with us, which can never fail to direct us aright, if fairly and honeſtly applied: ſuch as "*whatſoever ye would that* "*men ſhould do unto you, even ſo do unto them.*" —There is no occaſion, great or ſmall, on which you may not ſafely apply this rule, for the direction of your conduct: and, whilſt your heart honeſtly adheres to it, you can never be guilty of any ſort of injuſtice or unkindneſs. The two great commandments, which contain the ſummary of our duty to God and man, are no leſs eaſily retained, and made a ſtandard by which to judge our own hearts.—"*To love the Lord our*

" *God, with all our hearts, with all our*
" *minds, with all our ſtrength; and our neigh-*
" *bour* (or fellow creature) *as ourſelves.*"
" Love worketh no ill to his neighbour;" therefore, if you have true benevolence, you will never do any thing injurious to individuals, or to ſociety. Now, all crimes whatever, are (in their remoter conſequences, at leaſt, if not immediately, and apparently) injurious to the ſociety in which we live. It is impoſſible *to love God*, without deſiring to pleaſe him, and, as far as we are able, to reſemble him; therefore, the love of God muſt lead to every virtue in the higheſt degree; and, we may be ſure, we do not truly love him, if we content ourſelves with avoiding flagrant ſins, and do not ſtrive, in good earneſt, to reach the greateſt degree of perfection we are capable of. Thus do thoſe few words direct us to the higheſt Chriſtian virtue. Indeed, the whole tenor of the goſpel is to offer us every help, direction, and motive, tha can enable us to attain that degree of perfection, on which depends our eternal good

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What an example is ſet before us in our bleſſed Maſter! How is his whole life, from earlieſt youth, dedicated to the purſuit of true wiſdom, and to the practice of the moſt exalted virtue! When you ſee him, at *twelve years of age*, in the temple, amongſt the doctors, hearing them, and aſking them queſtions, on the ſubject of religion, and aſtoniſhing them all with his underſtanding and anſwers — you will ſay, perhaps, — "Well might the Son of God, even at thoſe "years, be far wiſer than the aged; but, "can a mortal child emulate ſuch heavenly "wiſdom? Can ſuch a pattern be propoſed "to *my* imitation?" — Yes, my dear; — remember that he has bequeathed to you his heavenly wiſdom, as far as concerns your own good. He has left you ſuch declarations of his will, and of the conſequences of your actions, as you are, even now, fully able to underſtand, if you will but attend to them. If then you will imitate his zeal for knowledge, if you will delight in gaining information and improvement; you may even now become "*wiſe unto ſalvation.*" —

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Unmoved by the praiſe he acquired amongſt theſe learned men, you ſee him meekly return to the ſubjection of a child, under thoſe who appeared to be his parents, though he was in reality their Lord: you ſee him return to live with them, to work for them, and to be the joy and ſolace of their lives; till the time came, when he was to enter on that ſcene of public action, for which his heavenly father had ſent him from his own right hand to take upon him the form of a poor carpenter's ſon. What a leſſon of humility is this, and of obedience to parents! —When, having received the glorious teſtimony from heaven, of his being the beloved Son of the moſt High, he enters on his public miniſtry, what an example does he give us, of the moſt extenſive and conſtant benevolence!—how are all his hours ſpent in doing good to the ſouls and bodies of men!—not the meaneſt ſinner is below his notice: —to reclaim and ſave them, he condeſcends to converſe familiarly with the moſt corrupt, as well as the moſt abject. All his miracles are wrought to benefit mankind; not one to puniſh

puniſh and afflict them. Inſtead of uſing the almighty power, which accompanied him, to the purpoſe of exalting himſelf and treading down his enemies, he makes no other uſe of it than to heal and to ſave.

When you come to read of his ſufferings and death, the ignominy and reproach, the ſorrow of mind, and torment of body which he ſubmitted to—when you conſider, that it was all for our ſakes—"that by his ſtripes "we are healed"—and by his death we are raiſed from deſtruction to everlaſting life—what can I ſay that can add any thing to the ſenſations you muſt then feel?—No power of language can make the ſcene more touching than it appears in the plain and ſimple narrations of the evangeliſts. The heart that is unmoved by it can be ſcarcely human:—but, my dear, the emotions of tenderneſs and compunction, which almoſt every one feels in reading this account, will be of no avail, unleſs applied to the true end—unleſs it inſpires you with a ſincere and warm affection towards your bleſſed Lord—with a firm reſolution to obey his commands;

—to

—to be his faithful diſciple—and ever to renounce and abhor thoſe ſins, which brought mankind under divine condemnation, and from which we have been redeemed, at ſo dear a rate. Remember that the title of Chriſtian, or follower of Chriſt, implies a more than ordinary degree of holineſs and goodneſs. As our motives to virtue are ſtronger than thoſe which are afforded to the reſt of mankind, our guilt will be proportionably greater if we depart from it.

Our Saviour appears to have had three great purpoſes, in deſcending from his glory, and dwelling amongſt men. The firſt, to teach them true virtue, both by his example and precepts: The ſecond, to give them the moſt forcible motives to the practice of it, by "bringing life and immortality to "light:" by ſhewing them the certainty of a reſurrection and judgment, and the abſolute neceſſity of obedience to God's laws. The third, to ſacrifice himſelf for us, to obtain by his death the remiſſion of our ſins upon our repentance and reformation, and the power of beſtowing on his ſincere followers

lowers the ineſtimable gift of immortal happineſs.

What a tremendous ſcene of the *laſt day* does the goſpel place before our eyes!—of *that day* when you, and every one of us, ſhall awake from the grave, and behold the Son of God, on his glorious tribunal, attended by millions of celeſtial beings, of whoſe ſuperior excellence we can now form no adequate idea:—When, in preſence of all mankind, of thoſe holy angels, and of the great judge himſelf, you muſt give an account of your paſt life, and hear your final doom, from which there can be no appeal, and which muſt determine your fate, to all eternity. Then think—if for a moment you can bear the thought—what will be the deſolation, ſhame and anguiſh of thoſe wretched ſouls, who ſhall hear theſe dreadful words;—"*Depart from me, ye curſed, into* "*everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and* "*his angels.*"—Oh!—my beloved child!—I cannot ſupport even the idea of your becoming one of thoſe undone, loſt creatures—I truſt in God's mercy, that you will

make a better uſe of that knowledge of his will, which he has vouchſafed you, and of thoſe amiable diſpoſitions he has given you. Let us therefore turn from this horrid, this inſupportable view—and rather endeavour to imagine, as far as is poſſible, what will be the ſenſations of your ſoul, if you ſhall hear our heavenly judge addreſs you in theſe tranſporting words—"*Come, thou bleſſed of* "*my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for* "*you, from the foundation of the world.*"—Think, what it muſt be, to become an object of the eſteem and applauſe—not only of all mankind aſſembled together—but of all the hoſt of heaven, of our bleſſed Lord himſelf—nay—of his and our almighty Father: to find your frail fleſh changed in a moment into a glorious celeſtial body, endowed with perfect beauty, health, and agility—to find your ſoul cleanſed from all its faults and infirmities; exalted to the pureſt and nobleſt affections—overflowing with divine love and rapturous gratitude!—to have your underſtanding enlightened and refined—your heart enlarged and purified—and every power, and

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diſpoſition of mind and body, adapted to the higheſt reliſh of virtue and happineſs!—Thus accompliſhed, to be admitted into the ſociety of amiable and happy beings, all united in the moſt perfect peace and friendſhip, all breathing nothing but love to God, and to eaeh other;—with them to dwell in ſcenes more delightful than the richeſt imagination can paint—free from every pain and care, and from all poſſibility of change or ſatiety:—but, above all, to enjoy the more immediate preſence of God himſelf—to be able to comprehend and admire his adorable perfections in a high degree, though ſtill far ſhort of their infinity—to be conſcious of his love and favour, and to rejoice in the light of his countenance!—but here all imagination fails:—We can form no idea of that bliſs which may be communicated to us by ſuch a near approach to the ſource of all beauty and all good:—We muſt content ourſelves with believing that it is what *mortal eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.* The crown of all our joys will be to know

that we are ſecure of poſſeſſing them *for ever* —What a tranſporting idea!

My deareſt child! can you reflect on all theſe things, and not feel the moſt earneſt longings after immortality?—Do not all other views and deſires ſeem mean and trifling, when compared with this?—And does not your inmoſt heart reſolve that this ſhall be the chief and conſtant object of its wiſhes and purſuit, through the whole courſe of your life?—If you are not inſenſible to that deſire of happineſs, which ſeems woven into our nature, you cannot ſurely be unmoved by the proſpect of ſuch a tranſcendant degree of it; and that, continued to all eternity—perhaps continually increaſing. You cannot but dread the forfeiture of ſuch an inheritance as the moſt inſupportable evil!—Remember then—remember the conditions on which alone it can be obtained. God will not give to vice, to careleſſneſs, or ſloth, the prize he has propoſed to virtue. You have every help that can animate your endeavours:—You have written laws to direct you—the example of Chriſt and his diſciples

ples to encourage you—the moſt awakening motives to engage you—and you have, beſides, the comfortable promiſe of conſtant aſſiſtance from the Holy Spirit, if you diligently and ſincerely pray for it. O, my dear Child!—let not all this mercy be loſt upon you—but give your attention to this your only important concern, and accept, with profound gratitude, the ineſtimable advantages that are thus affectionately offered you.

Though the four Goſpels are each of them a narration of the life, ſayings, and death of Chriſt; yet, as they are not exactly alike, but ſome circumſtances and ſayings, omitted in one, are recorded in another, you muſt make yourſelf perfectly miſtreſs of them all.

THE ACTS of the holy apoſtles, endowed with the Holy Ghoſt, and authoriſed by their divine Maſter, come next in order to be read.—Nothing can be more intereſting and edifying, than the hiſtory of their actions—of the piety, zeal, and courage, with which they preached the glad tidings of ſalvation—and of the various exertions of the wonderful powers conferred on them by the

Holy Spirit, for the confirmation of their miſſion.

The character of St. Paul, and his miraculous converſion, demand your particular attention: moſt of the apoſtles were men of low birth and education; but St. Paul was a Roman citizen; that is, he poſſeſſed the privileges annexed to the freedom of the city of Rome, which was conſidered as an high diſtinction in thoſe countries, that had been conquered by the Romans. He was educated amongſt the moſt learned ſect of the Jews, and by one of their principal doctors. He was a man of extraordinary eloquence, as appears not only in his writings, but in ſeveral ſpeeches in his own defence, pronounced before governors and courts of juſtice, when he was called to account for the doctrines he taught.—He ſeems to have been of an uncommonly warm temper, and zealous in whatever religion he profeſſed: this zeal, before his converſion, ſhewed itſelf in the moſt unjuſtifiable actions, by furiouſly perſecuting the innocent Chriſtians: but, though his actions were bad, we may be

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ſure his intentions were good; otherwiſe we ſhould not have ſeen a miracle employed to convince him of his miſtake, and to bring him into the right way. This example may aſſure us of the mercy of God towards miſtaken conſciences, and ought to inſpire us with the moſt enlarged charity and good-will towards thoſe, whoſe erroneous principles miſlead their conduct: inſtead of reſentment and hatred againſt their perſons, we ought only to feel an active wiſh of aſſiſting them to find the truth, ſince we know not whether, if convinced, they might not prove, like St. Paul, choſen veſſels to promote the honour of God, and of true religion. It is not my intention now to enter with you into any of the arguments for the truth of Chriſtianity, otherwiſe it would be impoſſible wholly to paſs over that which ariſes from this remarkable converſion, and which has been ſo admirably illuſtrated by a noble writer *, whoſe tract on this ſubject is in every body's hand.

Next follow the EPISTLES, which make

* Lord Lyttelton.

a very important part of the New Teſtament; and you cannot be too much employed in reading them. They contain the moſt excellent precepts and admonitions, and are of particular uſe in explaining more at large ſeveral doctrines of Chriſtianity, which we could not ſo fully comprehend without them. There are indeed in the Epiſtles of St. Paul many paſſages hard to be underſtood: Such, in particular, are the firſt eleven chapters to the Romans: the greater part of his Epiſtles to the Corinthians and Galatians: and ſeveral chapters of that to the Hebrews. Inſtead of perplexing yourſelf with theſe more obſcure paſſages of ſcripture, I would wiſh you to employ your attention chiefly on thoſe that are plain; and to judge of the doctrines taught in the other parts, by comparing them with what you find in theſe. It is through the neglect of this rule, that many have been led to draw the moſt abſurd doctrines from the holy ſcriptures.—Let me particularly recommend to your careful peruſal the 12th, 13th, 14th, and 15th chapters of the Epiſtle to the Romans. In the 14th chapter,

chapter, St. Paul has in view the difference between the Jewiſh and Gentile (or Heathen) converts at that time; the former were diſpoſed to look with horror on the latter, for their impiety in not paying the ſame regard to the diſtinctions of days and meats, that they did; and the latter, on the contrary, were inclined to look with contempt on the former, for their weakneſs and ſuperſtition. Excellent is the advice which the Apoſtle gives to both parties: he exhorts the Jewiſh converts not to judge, and the Gentiles not to deſpiſe; remembering that the kingdom of heaven is not meat and drink, but righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt:—Endeavour to conform yourſelf to this advice; to acquire a temper of univerſal candour and benevolence: and learn neither to deſpiſe nor condemn any perſons on account of their particular modes of faith and worſhip: remembering always, that goodneſs is confined to no party—that there are wiſe and worthy men among all the ſects of Chriſtians—and

that, to his own maſter, every one muſt ſtand or fall.

I will enter no farther into the ſeveral points diſcuſſed by St. Paul in his various epiſtles—moſt of them too intricate for your underſtanding at preſent, and many of them beyond my abilities to ſtate clearly. I will only again recommend to you, to read thoſe paſſages frequently, which, with ſo much fervour and energy, excite you to the practice of the moſt exalted piety and benevolence. If the effuſions of a heart, warm'd with the tendereſt affection for the whole human race—if precept, warning, encouragement, example, urged by an eloquence, which ſuch affection only could inſpire, are capable of influencing your mind—you cannot fail to find, in ſuch parts of his epiſtles as are adapted to your underſtanding, the ſtrongeſt perſuaſives to every virtue that can adorn and improve your nature.

The Epiſtle of St. James is entirely practical, and exceedingly fine; you cannot ſtudy it too much. It ſeems particularly

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deſigned to guard Chriſtians againſt miſunderſtanding ſome things in St. Paul's writings, which have been fatally perverted to the encouragement of a dependance on faith alone, without good works. But the more rational commentators will tell you, that by the works of the law, which the apoſtle aſſerts to be incapable of juſtifying us, he means, not the works of moral righteouſneſs, but the ceremonial works of the Moſaic law; on which the Jews laid the greateſt ſtreſs, as neceſſary to ſalvation. But, St. James tells us, that "if any man among us "ſeem to be religious, and bridleth not his "tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, that "man's religion is vain."—And that, "pure "religion, and undefiled before God and "the Father, is this, to viſit the fatherleſs "and widow in their affliction, and to keep "himſelf unſpotted from the world." Faith in Chriſt, if it produce not theſe effects, he declares is dead, or of no power.

The Epiſtles of St. Peter are alſo full of the beſt inſtructions and admonitions, concerning the relative duties of life; amongſt

which are ſet forth the duties of women in general, and of wives in particular. Some part of his ſecond Epiſtle is prophetical; warning the church of falſe teachers, and falſe doctrines, which ſhould undermine morality, and diſgrace the cauſe of Chriſtianity.

The firſt of St. JOHN is written in a highly figurative ſtile, which makes it in ſome parts hard to be underſtood: but the ſpirit of divine love, which it ſo fervently expreſſes, renders it highly edifying and delightful.—That love of God and of man, which this beloved apoſtle ſo pathetically recommends, is in truth the eſſence of religion, as our Saviour himſelf informs us.

The book of REVELATIONS contains a prophetical account of moſt of the great events relating to the Chriſtian church, which were to happen from the time of the writer, St. John, to the end of the world. Many learned men have taken a great deal of pains to explain it; and they have done this in many inſtances very ſucceſsfully: but, I think, it is yet too ſoon for you to

ſtudy this part of ſcripture: ſome years hence perhaps there may be no objection to your attempting it, and taking into your hands the beſt expoſitions to aſſiſt you in reading ſuch of the moſt difficult parts of the New Teſtament as you cannot now be ſuppoſed to underſtand.—May Heaven direct you in ſtudying this ſacred volume, and render it the means of making you wiſe unto ſalvation!—May you love and reverence, as it deſerves, this bleſſed and invaluable book, which contains the beſt rule of life, the cleareſt declaration of the will and laws of the Deity, the reviving aſſurance of favour to true penitents, and the unſpeakably joyful tidings of eternal life and happineſs to all the truly virtuous, through Jeſus Chriſt, the Saviour and Deliverer of the world!

Adieu.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

YOU will have read the New Teſtament to very little purpoſe, my deareſt Niece, if you do not perceive the great end and intention of all its precepts to be the improvement and regulation of the heart: not the outward actions alone, but the inward affections, which give birth to them, are the ſubjects of thoſe precepts; as appears in our Saviour's explanation * of the commandments delivered to Moſes; and in a thouſand other paſſages of the goſpels, which it is needleſs to recite. There are no virtues more inſiſted on, as neceſſary to our future happineſs, than humility, and ſincerity, or uprightneſs of heart; yet, none more difficult and rare. Pride and vanity, the vices oppoſite to humility, are the ſources of almoſt all the worſt faults, both of men and women. The latter are particularly accuſed—and not without reaſon—of *vanity*, the vice

* Matth. V.

of

of *little* minds, chiefly converſant with trifling ſubjects. Pride and vanity have been ſuppoſed to differ ſo eſſentially, as hardly ever to be found in the ſame perſon. "Too "proud to be vain," is no uncommon expreſſion, by which, I ſuppoſe, is meant, too proud to be over anxious for the admiration of others: but this ſeems to be founded on miſtake. Pride is, I think, an high opinion of one's ſelf, and an affected contempt of others: I ſay *affected*, for that it is not a *real* contempt is evident from this, that the loweſt object of it is important enough to torture the proud man's heart, only by refuſing him the homage and admiration he requires. Thus Haman could reliſh none of the advantages on which he valued himſelf, whilſt that Mordecai, whom he pretended to deſpiſe, ſat ſtill in the king's gate, and would not bow to him as he paſſed. But, as the proud man's contempt of others is only aſſumed with a view to awe them into reverence by his pretended ſuperiority, ſo it does not preclude an extreme inward anxiety about their opinions, and a ſlaviſh dependance

ance on them for all his gratifications: Pride, though a diſtinct paſſion, is ſeldom unaccompanied by vanity, which is an extravagant deſire of admiration. Indeed, I never ſaw an inſolent perſon, in whom a diſcerning eye might not diſcover a very large ſhare of vanity, and of envy, its uſual companion. One may nevertheleſs ſee many *vain* perſons who are not *proud*: though they deſire to be admired, they do not always admire themſelves; but as timid minds are apt to deſpair of thoſe things they earneſtly wiſh for, ſo you will often ſee the woman who is moſt anxious to be thought handſome, moſt inclined to be diſſatisfied with her looks, and to think all the aſſiſtance of art too little to attain the end deſired. To this cauſe, I believe, we may generally attribute affectation; which ſeems to imply a mean opinion of one's own real form, or character, while we ſtrive againſt nature to alter ourſelves by ridiculous contorſions of body, or by feigned ſentiments and unnatural manners. There is no art ſo mean, which this mean paſſion will not deſcend to for its gratification—no

creature

creature ſo inſignificant, whoſe incenſe it will not gladly receive. Far from deſpiſing others, the vain man will court them with the moſt aſſiduous adulation; in hopes, by feeding their vanity, to induce them to ſupply the craving wants of his own. He will put on the guiſe of benevolence, tenderneſs, and friendſhip, where he feels not the leaſt degree of kindneſs, in order to prevail on good-nature and gratitude, to like and to commend him: but if, in any particular caſe, he fancies, that airs of inſolence and contempt may ſucceed better, he makes no ſcruple to aſſume them; though ſo awkwardly, that he ſtill appears to depend on the breath of the perſon, he would be thought to deſpiſe. Weak and timid natures ſeldom venture to try this laſt method; and, when they do, it is without the aſſurance neceſſary to carry it on with ſucceſs: but, a bold and confident mind will oftener endeavour to command and extort admiration than to court it. As women are more fearful than men, perhaps this may be one reaſon why they are more vain than proud; whilſt the other

other ſex are oftener proud than vain. It is, I ſuppoſe, from ſome opinion of a certain greatneſs of mind accompanying the one vice rather than the other, that many will readily confeſs their pride, nay and even be proud of their pride, whilſt every creature is aſhamed of being convicted of vanity. You ſee, however, that the end of both is the ſame, though purſued by different means; or, if it differs, it is in the importance of the ſubject.—Whilſt men are proud of power, of wealth, dignity, learning, or abilities, young women are uſually ambitious of nothing more than to be admired for their perſons, their dreſs, or their moſt trivial accompliſhments. The homage of men is their grand object; but, they only deſire them to be in love with their perſons, careleſs how deſpicable their minds appear, even to theſe their pretended adorers. I have known a woman ſo vain as to boaſt of the moſt diſgraceful addreſſes; being contented to be thought meanly of, in points the moſt intereſting to her honour, for the ſake of having it known, that her perſon was attractive enough

enough to make a man tranſgreſs the bounds of reſpect due to her character, which was not a vicious one, if you except this intemperate vanity. But, this paſſion too often leads to the moſt ruinous actions, always corrupts the heart, and, when indulged, renders it, perhaps, as diſpleaſing in the ſight of the Almighty, as thoſe faults which find leaſt mercy from the world; yet alas! it is a paſſion ſo prevailing, I had almoſt ſaid univerſal, in our ſex, that it requires all the efforts of reaſon, and all the aſſiſtance of grace, totally to ſubdue it. Religion is indeed the only effectual remedy for this evil. If our hearts are not dedicated to God, they will in ſome way or other be dedicated to the world, both in youth and age. If our actions are not conſtantly referred to him, if his approbation and favour is not our principal object, we ſhall certainly take up with the applauſe of men, and make that the ruling motive of our conduct. How melancholy is it to ſee this phantom ſo eagerly followed through life!—whilſt all that is truly valuable to us is looked upon with indifference;

rence; or, at beſt, made ſubordinate to this darling purſuit!

Equally vain and abſurd is every ſcheme of life that is not ſubſervient to, and does not terminate in that great end of our being —the attainment of real excellence, and of the favour of God. Whenever this becomes ſincerely our object, then will pride and vanity, envy, ambition, covetouſneſs, and every evil paſſion, loſe their power over us; and we ſhall, in the language of ſcripture, "walk humbly with our God." We ſhall then ceaſe to repine under our natural or accidental diſadvantages, and feel diſſatisfied only with our moral defects;—we ſhall love and reſpect all our fellow creatures, as the children of the ſame dear parent, and particularly thoſe, who ſeek to do his will: All our delight will be "in the ſaints that are "in the earth, and in ſuch as excel in vir-"tue." We ſhall wiſh to cultivate good-will, and to promote innocent enjoyment wherever we are;—we ſhall ſtrive to pleaſe, not from vanity, but from benevolence. Inſtead of contemplating our own fancied perfec-

tions,

tions, or even real ſuperiority with ſelf-complacence, religion will teach us to "look "into ourſelves, and fear:"—the beſt of us, God knows, have enough to fear, if we honeſtly ſearch into all the dark receſſes of the heart, and bring out every thought and intention fairly to the light, to be tried by the precepts of our pure and holy religion.

It is with the rules of the goſpel we muſt compare ourſelves, and not with the world around us; for we know that "the many "are wicked;" and that we muſt not be "conformed to the world."

How neceſſary it is, frequently thus to enter into ourſelves, and ſearch out our ſpirit, will appear, if we conſider, how much the human heart is prone to inſincerity, and how often, from being firſt led by vanity into attempts to impoſe upon others, we come at laſt to impoſe on ourſelves.

There is nothing more common than to ſee people fall into the moſt ridiculous miſtakes, with regard to their own characters; but I can by no means allow ſuch miſtakes to be unavoidable, and therefore innocent: They

aroſe from voluntary inſincerity, and are continued for want of that ſtrict honeſty towards ourſelves and others, which the Scripture calls "*ſingleneſs of heart*;" and which in modern language is termed *ſimplicity* — the moſt enchanting of all qualities, eſteemed and beloved in proportion to its rareneſs.

He, who "requires truth in the inward "parts," will not excuſe our ſelf-deception; for he has commanded us to examine ourſelves diligently, and has given us ſuch rules as can never miſlead us, if we deſire the truth, and are willing to ſee our faults, in order to correct them. But this is the point in which we are defective; we are deſirous to gain our own approbation, as well as that of others, at a cheaper rate than that of being really what we ought to be; and we take pains to perſuade ourſelves that we are that which we indolently admire and approve.

There is nothing in which this ſelf-deception is more notorious than in what regards ſentiment and feeling. Let a vain young woman be told that tenderneſs and ſoftneſs is the peculiar charm of the ſex — that even their

weakneſs

weakneſs is lovely, and their fears becoming —and you will preſently obſerve her grow ſo tender as to be ready to weep for a fly; ſo fearful, that ſhe ſtarts at a feather; and ſo weak-hearted, that the ſmalleſt accident quite overpowers her. Her fondneſs and affection becomes fulſome and ridiculous; her compaſſion grows contemptible weakneſs; and her apprehenſiveneſs the moſt abject cowardice: for, when once ſhe quits the direction of Nature, ſhe knows not where to ſtop, and continually expoſes herſelf by the moſt abſurd extremes.

Nothing ſo effectually defeats its own ends as this kind of affectation: for though warm affections and tender feelings are beyond meaſure amiable and charming, when perfectly natural, and kept under the due controul of reaſon and principle, yet nothing is ſo truly diſguſting as the affectation of them, or even the unbridled indulgence of ſuch as are real.

Remember, my dear, that our feelings were not given us for our ornament, but to ſpur us on to right actions.—Compaſſion, for inſtance, was not impreſſed upon the human

heart, only to adorn the fair face with tears, and to give an agreeable languor to the eyes; it was deſigned to excite our utmoſt endeavours to relieve the ſufferer. Yet, how often have I heard that ſelfiſh weakneſs, which flies from the ſight of diſtreſs, dignified with the name of tenderneſs!—"My friend is, I hear, "in the deepeſt affliction and miſery;—I "have not ſeen her—for indeed I cannot "bear ſuch ſcenes—they affect me too much! "—thoſe who have leſs ſenſibility are fitter "for this world;—but, for my part, I own, "I am not able to ſupport ſuch things.—I "ſhall not attempt to viſit her, till I hear ſhe "has recovered her ſpirits."—This have I heard ſaid, with an air of complacence; and the poor ſelfiſh creature has perſuaded herſelf that ſhe had finer feelings than thoſe generous friends, who were ſitting patiently in the houſe of mourning—watching, in ſilence, the proper moment to pour in the balm of comfort;—who ſuppreſſed their own ſenſations, and only attended to thoſe of the afflicted perſon—and whoſe tears flowed in ſecret, whilſt their eyes and voice were taught

to

to enliven the ſinking heart with the appearance of chearfulneſs.

That ſort of tenderneſs, which makes us uſeleſs, may indeed be pitied and excuſed, if owing to natural imbecillity; but, if it pretends to lovelineſs and excellence, it becomes truly contemptible.

The ſame degree of active courage is not to be expected in woman as in man; and, not belonging to her nature, it is not agreeable in her: But paſſive courage—patience, and fortitude under ſufferings—preſence of mind, and calm reſignation in danger—are ſurely deſirable in every rational creature; eſpecially in one profeſſing to believe in an over-ruling Providence, in which we may at all times quietly confide, and which we may ſafely truſt with every event that does not depend upon our own will. Whenever you find yourſelf deficient in theſe virtues, let it be a ſubject of ſhame, and humiliation—not of vanity and ſelf-complacence: do not fancy yourſelf the more amiable for that which really makes you deſpicable—but content yourſelf with the faults and weakneſſes that

belong to you, without putting on more by way of ornament. With regard to tenderneſs, remember that compaſſion is beſt ſhewn by an ardour to relieve—and affection by aſſiduity to promote the good and happineſs of the perſons you love: that tears are unamiable, inſtead of being ornamental, when voluntarily indulged; and can never be attractive but when they flow irreſiſtibly, and avoid obſervation as much as poſſible: The ſame may be ſaid of every other mark of paſſion. It attracts our ſympathy, if involuntary and not deſigned for our notice—It offends, if we ſee that it is purpoſely indulged and obtruded on our obſervation.

Another point, on which the heart is apt to deceive itſelf, is generoſity: we cannot bear to ſuſpect ourſelves of baſe and ungenerous feelings, therefore we let them work without attending to them, or we endeavour to find out ſome better motive for thoſe actions, which really flow from envy and malignity. Before you flatter yourſelf that you are a generous benevolent perſon, take care to examine, whether you are really glad of every

advantage

advantage and excellence, which your friends and companions poſſeſs, though they are ſuch as you are yourſelf deficient in. If your ſiſter or friend makes a greater proficiency than yourſelf in any accompliſhment, which you are in purſuit of, do you never wiſh to ſtop her progreſs, inſtead of trying to haſten your own?

The boundaries between virtuous emulation and vicious envy are very nice, and may be eaſily miſtaken. The firſt will awaken your attention to your own defects and excite your endeavours to improve; the laſt will make you repine at the improvements of others, and wiſh to rob them of the praiſe they have deſerved. Do you ſincerely rejoice when your ſiſter is enjoying pleaſure or commendation, though you are at the ſame time in diſagreeable or mortifying circumſtances? —Do you delight to ſee her approved and beloved, even by thoſe who do not pay you equal attention?—Are you afflicted and humbled, when ſhe is found to be in fault, though you yourſelf are remarkably clear from the ſame offence? — If your heart aſſures you of

the affirmative to theſe queſtions, then may you think yourſelf a kind ſiſter, and a generous friend: for, you muſt obſerve, my dear, that ſcarcely any creature is ſo depraved as not to be capable of kind affections in ſome circumſtances. We are all naturally benevolent, when no ſelfiſh intereſt interferes, and where no advantage is to be given up: we can all pity diſtreſs, when it lies complaining at our feet, and confeſſes our ſuperiority and happier ſituation; but I have ſeen the ſufferer himſelf become the object of envy and ill-will, as ſoon as his fortitude and greatneſs of mind have begun to attract admiration, and to make the envious perſon feel the ſuperiority of virtue above good fortune.

To take ſincere pleaſure in the bleſſings and excellencies of others is a much ſurer mark of benevolence than to pity their calamities: and, you muſt always acknowledge yourſelf ungenerous and ſelfiſh, whenever you are leſs ready to "rejoice with them that do "rejoice," than to "weep with them that "weep." If ever your commendations of others are forced from you, by the fear of betraying

betraying your envy — or if ever you feel a ſecret deſire to mention ſomething that may abate the admiration given them, do not try to conceal the baſe diſpoſition from yourſelf, ſince that is not the way to cure it.

Human nature is ever liable to corruption, and has in it the ſeeds of every vice, as well as of every virtue; and, the firſt will be continually ſhooting forth and growing up, if not carefully watched and rooted out as faſt as they appear. It is the buſineſs of religion to purify and exalt us, from a ſtate of imperfection and infirmity, to that which is neceſſary and eſſential to happineſs. Envy would make us miſerable in heaven itſelf, could it be admitted there; for we muſt there ſee beings far more excellent, and conſequently more happy than ourſelves; and, till we can rejoice in ſeeing virtue rewarded in proportion to its degree, we can never hope to be among the number of the bleſſed.

Watch then, my dear child, and obſerve every evil propenſity of your heart, that you may in time correct it, with the aſſiſtance of that grace which alone can conquer the evils of

of our nature, and which you muſt conſtantly and earneſtly implore.

I muſt add, that even thoſe vices which you would moſt bluſh to own, and which moſt effectually defile and vilify the female heart, may by degrees be introduced into yours — to the ruin of that virtue, without which, miſery and ſhame muſt be your portion — unleſs the avenues of the heart are guarded by a ſincere abhorrence of every thing that approaches towards evil. Would you be of the number of thoſe bleſſed, "who are "pure in heart,"—you muſt hate and avoid every thing, both in books and in converſation, that conveys impure ideas, however neatly cloathed in decent language, or recommended to your taſte by pretended refinements, and tender ſentiments — by elegance of ſtile, or force of wit and genius.

I muſt not now begin to give you my thoughts on the regulation of the affections, as that is a ſubject of too much conſequence to be ſoon diſmiſſed—I ſhall dedicate to it my next letter: in the mean time, believe me,

Your ever affectionate.

LETTER V.

THE attachments of the heart, on which almoſt all the happineſs or miſery of life depends, are moſt intereſting objects of our conſideration. I ſhall give my dear niece the obſervations which experience has enabled me to draw from real life, and not from what others have ſaid or written, however great their authority.

The firſt attachment of young hearts is *friendſhip* — the nobleſt and happieſt of affections, when real and built on a ſolid foundation; but, oftener pernicious than uſeful to very young people, becauſe the connection itſelf is ill underſtood, and the ſubjects of it frequently ill choſen. Their firſt error is that of ſuppoſing equality of age, and exact ſimilarity of diſpoſition indiſpenſably requiſite in friends; whereas theſe are circumſtances which in great meaſure diſqualify them for aſſiſting each other in moral improvements, or ſupplying each other's defects; they expoſe

poſe them to the ſame dangers, and incline them to encourage rather than correct each other's failings.

The grand cement of this kind of friendſhip is telling ſecrets, which they call confidence; and I verily believe that the deſire of having ſecrets to tell, has often helped to draw ſilly girls into very unhappy adventures. If they have no lover or amour to talk of, the too frequent ſubject of their confidence is betraying the ſecrets of their families; or conjuring up fancied hardſhips to complain of againſt their parents or relations: this odious cabal, they call friendſhip; and fancy themſelves dignified by the profeſſion; but nothing is more different from the reality, as is ſeen by obſerving how generally thoſe early friendſhips drop off, as the parties advance in years and underſtanding.

Do not you, my dear, be too ready to profeſs a friendſhip with any of your young companions. Love them, and be always ready to ſerve and oblige them, and to promote all their innocent gratifications; but, be very careful how you enter into confidences with girls

girls of your own age. Rather chooſe ſome perſon of riper years and judgment, whoſe good-nature and worthy principles may aſſure you of her readineſs to do you ſervice, and of her candour and condeſcenſion towards you.

I do not expect that youth ſhould delight to aſſociate with age, or ſhould lay open its feelings and inclinations to ſuch as have almoſt forgot what they were, or how to make proper allowance for them; but if you are fortunate enough to meet with a young woman eight or ten years older than yourſelf, of good ſenſe and good principles, to whom you can make yourſelf agreeable, it may be one of the happieſt circumſtances of your life. She will be able to adviſe and to improve you —and your deſire of this aſſiſtance will recommend you to her taſte, as much as her ſuperior abilities will recommend her to you. Such a connection will afford you more pleaſure, as well as more profit, than you can expect from a girl like yourſelf, equally unprovided with knowledge, prudence, or any

of

of thoſe qualifications, which are neceſſary to make ſociety delightful.

With a friend, ſuch as I have deſcribed, of twenty-three or twenty-four years of age, you can hardly paſs an hour without finding yourſelf brought forwarder in ſome uſeful knowledge; without learning ſomething of the world, or of your own nature, ſome rule of behaviour, or ſome neceſſary caution in the conduct of life: for, even in the gayeſt converſations, ſuch uſeful hints may often be gathered from thoſe, whoſe knowledge and experience are much beyond our own. Whenever you find yourſelf in real want of advice, or ſeek the relief of unburdening your heart, ſuch a friend will be able to judge of the feelings you deſcribe, or of the circumſtances you are in—perhaps from her own experience—or, at leaſt, from the knowledge ſhe will have gained of human nature; ſhe will be able to point out your dangers, and to guide you into the right path—or, if ſhe finds herſelf incapable, ſhe will have the prudence to direct you to ſome abler adviſer. The age I have

have mentioned will not prevent her joining in your pleaſures, nor will it make her a dull or grave companion; on the contrary, ſhe will have more materials for entertaining converſation, and her livelineſs will ſhew itſelf more agreeably than in one of your own age. Yours therefore will be the advantage in ſuch a connection; yet, do not deſpair of being admitted into it, if you have an amiable and docile diſpoſition. Ingenuous youth has many charms for a benevolent mind; and, as nothing is more endearing than the exerciſe of benevolence, the hope of being uſeful and beneficial to you will make her fond of your company.

I have known ſome of the ſweeteſt and moſt delightful connections between perſons of different ages, in which the elder has received the higheſt gratification from the affection and docility of the younger; whilſt the latter has gained the nobleſt advantages from the converſation and counſels of her wiſer friend. Nor has the attachment been without uſe as well as pleaſure to the elder party. She has found that there is no better

way of improving one's own attainments than by imparting them to another; and the deſire of doing this in the moſt acceptable way has added a ſweetneſs and gentleneſs to her manner, and taught her the arts of inſinuating inſtruction, and of winning the heart, whilſt ſhe convinces the underſtanding.

I hope, my dear, you in your turn will be this uſeful and engaging friend to your younger companions, particularly to your ſiſter and brothers, who ought ever — unleſs they ſhould prove unworthy — to be your neareſt and deareſt friends, whoſe intereſt and welfare you are bound to deſire as much as your own. If you are wanting here, do not fancy yourſelf qualified for friendſhip with others, but, be aſſured, your heart is too narrow and ſelfiſh for ſo generous an affection.

Remember that the end of true friendſhip is the good of its object, and the cultivation of virtue, in two hearts emulous of each other, and deſirous to perpetuate their ſociety beyond the grave. Nothing can be more contrary to this end than that mutual intercourſe of flattery, which ſome call friendſhip. A

real friend will venture to diſpleaſe me, rather than indulge my faulty inclinations, or increaſe my natural frailties; ſhe will endeavour to make me acquainted with myſelf, and will put me upon guarding the weak parts of my character.

Friendſhip, in the higheſt ſenſe of the word, can only ſubſiſt between perſons of ſtrict integrity, and true generoſity. Before you fancy yourſelf poſſeſſed of ſuch a treaſure, you ſhould examine the value of your own heart, and ſee how well it is qualified for ſo ſacred a connection: and then, a harder taſk remains—to find out whether the object of your affection is alſo endued with the ſame virtuous diſpoſition. Youth and inexperience are ill able to penetrate into characters: the leaſt appearance of good attracts their admiration, and they immediately ſuppoſe they have found the object they purſued.

It is a melancholy conſideration that the judgment can only be formed by experience, which generally comes too late for our own uſe, and is ſeldom accepted for that of others. I fear it is in vain for me to tell you what

dangerous miſtakes I made in the early choice of friends—how incapable I then was of finding out ſuch as were fit for me, and how little I was acquainted with the true nature of friendſhip, when I thought myſelf moſt fervently engaged in it!—I am ſenſible all this will hardly perſuade you to chooſe by the eyes of others, or even to ſuſpect that your own may be deceived. Yet, if you ſhould give any weight to my obſervations, it may not be quite uſeleſs to mention to you ſome of the eſſential requiſites in a friend; and to exhort you never to chooſe one in whom they are wanting.

The firſt of theſe is a deep and ſincere regard for religion. If your friend draws her principles from the ſame ſource with yourſelf, if the goſpel precepts are the rule of her life, as well as of yours, you will always know what to expect from her, and have one common ſtandard of right and wrong to refer to, by which to regulate all material points of conduct. The woman who thinks lightly of ſacred things, or who is ever heard to ſpeak of them with levity or indifference, cannot reaſonably

reaſonably be expected to pay a more ſerious regard to the laws of friendſhip, or to be uniformly punctual in the performance of any of the duties of ſociety: take no ſuch perſon to your boſom, however recommended by good-humour, wit, or any other qualification; nor let gaiety or thoughtleſſneſs be deemed an excuſe for offending in this important point: a perſon habituated to the love and reverence of religion and virtue no more wants the guard of ſerious conſideration to reſtrain her from ſpeaking diſreſpectfully of them than to prevent her ſpeaking ill of her deareſt friend. In the livelieſt hour of mirth, the innocent heart can dictate nothing but what is innocent: it will immediately take alarm at the apprehenſion of doing wrong, and ſtop at once in the full career of youthful ſprightlineſs, if reminded of the neglect or tranſgreſſion of any duty. Watch for theſe ſymptoms of innocence and goodneſs, and admit no one to your entire affection, who would ever perſuade you to make light of any ſort of offence, or who can treat with levity

or contempt, any perſon or thing that bears a relation to religion.

A due regard to reputation is the next indiſpenſable qualification.—"Have regard to thy "name," ſaith the wiſe ſon of Sirach, "for "that will continue with thee above a thou-"ſand great treaſures of gold." The young perſon who is careleſs of blame, and indifferent to the eſteem of the wiſe and prudent part of the world, is not only a moſt dangerous companion, but gives a certain proof of the want of rectitude in her own mind. Diſcretion is the guardian of all the virtues; and, when ſhe forſakes them, they cannot long reſiſt the attacks of an enemy. There is a profligacy of ſpirit in defying the rules of decorum, and deſpiſing cenſure, which ſeldom ends otherwiſe than in extreme corruption and utter ruin. Modeſty and prudence are qualities that early diſplay themſelves and are eaſily diſcerned: where theſe do not appear, you ſhould avoid, not only friendſhip, but every ſtep towards intimacy, leſt your own character ſhould ſuffer with that of your companion;

companion; but, where they ſhine forth in any eminent degree, you may ſafely cultivate an acquaintance, in the reaſonable hope of finding the ſolid fruits of virtue beneath ſuch ſweet and promiſing bloſſoms: ſhould you be diſappointed, you will at leaſt have run no riſque in the ſearch after them, and may cheriſh as a creditable acquaintance the perſon ſo adorned, though ſhe may not deſerve a place in your inmoſt heart.

The underſtanding muſt next be examined: and this is a point, which requires ſo much underſtanding to judge of in another, that I muſt earneſtly recommend to you, not to rely entirely on your own, but to take the opinion of your older friends. I do not wiſh you to ſeek for bright and uncommon talents, though theſe are ſources of inexhauſtible delight and improvement, when found in company with ſolid judgment and ſound principles. Good ſenſe (by which I mean a capacity for reaſoning juſtly and diſcerning truly) applied to the uſes of life, and exerciſed in diſtinguiſhing characters and directing conduct, is alone *neceſſary* to an intimate connection; but,

without this, the beſt intentions, though certain of reward hereafter, may fail of producing their effects in this life; nor can they ſingly conſtitute the character of an uſeful and valuable friend. On the other hand, the moſt dazzling genius, or the moſt engaging wit and humour, can but ill anſwer the purpoſes of friendſhip, without plain common ſenſe and a faculty of juſt reaſoning.

What can one do with thoſe who will not be anſwered with reaſon — and who, when you are endeavouring to convince or perſuade them by ſerious argument, will parry the blow with a witty repartee or a ſtroke of poignant raillery? I know not whether ſuch a reply is leſs provoking than that of an obſtinate fool, who anſwers your ſtrongeſt reaſons with — "What you ſay may be very true, "but this is my way of thinking."—A ſmall acquaintance with the world will ſhew you inſtances of the moſt abſurd and fooliſh conduct in perſons of brilliant parts and entertaining faculties. But how trifling is the talent of diverting an idle hour, compared with true wiſdom and prudence, which are perpetually

perpetually wanted to direct us ſafely and happily through life, and to make us uſeful and valuable to others!

Fancy, I know, will have her ſhare in friendſhip, as well as in love;—you muſt pleaſe, as well as ſerve me, before I can love you as the friend of my heart. But the faculties that pleaſe for an evening may not pleaſe for life. The humourous man ſoon runs through his ſtock of odd ſtories, mimickry, and jeſt; and the wit, by conſtantly repeated flaſhes, confounds and tires one's intellect, inſtead of enlivening it with agreeable ſurprize: but good ſenſe can neither tire nor wear out;—it improves by exerciſe—and increaſes in value, the more it is known: the pleaſure it gives in converſation is laſting and ſatisfactory, becauſe it is accompanied with improvement; its worth is proportioned to the occaſion that calls for it, and riſes higheſt on the moſt intereſting topics; the heart, as well as the underſtanding, finds its account in it; and our nobleſt intereſts are promoted by the entertainment we receive from ſuch a companion.

A good temper is the next qualification, the value of which in a friend, you will want no arguments to prove, when you are truly convinced of the neceſſity of it in yourſelf, which I ſhall endeavour to ſhew you in a following letter. But, as this is a quality in which you may be deceived, without a long and intimate acquaintance, you muſt not be haſty in forming connections, before you have had ſufficient opportunity for making obſervations on this head. A young perſon, when pleaſed and enlivened by the preſence of her youthful companions, ſeldom ſhews ill temper; which muſt be extreme indeed, if it is not at leaſt controllable in ſuch ſituations. But, you muſt watch her behaviour to her own family, and the degree of eſtimation ſhe ſtands in with them. Obſerve her manner to ſervants and inferiors — to children — and even to animals. See in what manner ſhe bears diſappointments, contradiction, and reſtraint; and what degree of vexation ſhe expreſſes on any accident of loſs or trouble. If in ſuch little trials ſhe ſhews a meek, reſigned, and chear-

ful

ful temper, ſhe will probably preſerve it on greater occaſions; but if ſhe is impatient and diſcontented under theſe, how will ſhe ſupport the far greater evils which may await her in her progreſs thro' life?—If you ſhould have an opportunity of ſeeing her in ſickneſs, obſerve whether her complaints are of a mild and gentle kind, forced from her by pain, and reſtrained as much as poſſible—or whether they are expreſſions of a turbulent, rebellious mind, that hardly ſubmits to the divine hand. See whether ſhe is tractable, conſiderate, kind, and grateful to thoſe about her; or whether ſhe takes the opportunity, which their compaſſion gives her, to tyrannize over, and torment them. Women are in general very liable to ill health, which muſt neceſſarily make them in ſome meaſure troubleſome and diſagreeable to thoſe they live with. They ſhould therefore take the more pains to lighten the burden as much as poſſible, by patience and good-humour; and be careful not to let their infirmities break in, on the health, freedom, or enjoyments of others, more than is needful and juſt.

Some

Some ladies ſeem to think it very improper for any perſon within their reach to enjoy a moment's comfort while they are in pain; and make no ſcruple of ſacrificing to their own leaſt convenience, whenever they are indiſpoſed, the proper reſt, meals, or refreſhments of their ſervants, and even ſometimes of their huſbands and children. But their ſelfiſhneſs defeats its own purpoſe, as it weakens that affection and tender pity which excites the moſt aſſiduous ſervices, and affords the moſt healing balm to the heart of the ſufferer.

I have already expreſſed my wiſhes that your choſen friend may be ſome years older than yourſelf; but this is an advantage not always to be obtained. Whatever be her age, — *religion*, *diſcretion*, *good ſenſe*, and *good temper*, muſt on no account be diſpenſed with; and, till you can find one ſo qualified, you had better make no cloſer connection than that of a mutual intercourſe of civilities and good offices. But, if it is always your aim to mix with the beſt company, and to be worthy of ſuch ſociety, you will

will probably meet with ſome one among them deſerving your affection, to whom you may be equally agreeable.

When I ſpeak of the beſt company, I do not mean in the common acceptation of the word — perſons of high rank and fortune — but rather the moſt worthy and ſenſible. It is however very important to a young woman to be introduced into life on a reſpectable footing, and to converſe with thoſe whoſe manners and ſtyle of life may poliſh her behaviour, refine her ſentiments, and give her conſequence in the eye of the world. Your equals in rank are moſt proper for intimacy, but to be ſometimes amongſt your ſuperiors is every way deſirable and advantageous, unleſs it ſhould inſpire you with pride, or with the fooliſh deſire of emulating their grandeur and expence.

Above all things avoid intimacy with thoſe of low birth and education; nor think it a mark of humility to delight in ſuch ſociety; for it much oftener proceeds from the meaneſt kind of pride, that of being the head of the company, and ſeeing your companions

ſubſervient

ſubſervient to you. The ſervile flattery and ſubmiſſion, which uſually recommend ſuch people, and make amends for their ignorance and want of converſation, will infallibly corrupt your heart, and make all company inſipid from whom you cannot expect the ſame homage. Your manners and faculties, inſtead of improving, muſt be continually lowered to ſuit you to your companions; and, believe me, you will find it no eaſy matter to raiſe them again to a level with thoſe of polite and well-informed people.

The greateſt kindneſs and civility to inferiors is perfectly conſiſtent with proper caution on this head. Treat them always with affability, and talk to them of their own affairs, with an affectionate intereſt; but never make them familiar, nor admit them as aſſociates in your diverſions: but, above all, never truſt them with your ſecrets, which is putting yourſelf entirely in their power, and ſubjecting yourſelf to the moſt ſhameful ſlavery. The only reaſon for making choice of ſuch confidants muſt be the certainty that they will not venture to blame or contradict inclinations,

inclinations, which you are conſcious no true friend would encourage. But this is a meanneſs into which I truſt you are in no danger of falling. I rather hope you will have the laudable ambition of ſpending your time chiefly with thoſe whoſe ſuperior talents, education, and politeneſs, may continually improve you, and whoſe ſociety will do you honour. However let no advantage of this kind weigh againſt the want of principle. I have long ago reſolved with David, that, as far as lies in my power, "I will not "know a wicked perſon." Nothing can compenſate for the contagion of bad example, and for the danger of wearing off by uſe that abhorrence of evil actions and ſentiments, which every innocent mind ſets out with, but which an indiſcriminate acquaintance in the world ſoon abates, and at length deſtroys.

If you are good, and ſeek friendſhip only amongſt the good, I truſt you will be happy enough to find it. The wiſe ſon of Sirach pronounces that you will. — * "A faithful

* Eccluſ. v.

"friend,"

" friend," ſaith he, " is the medicine of " life; and he that feareth the Lord ſhall " find him. Whoſo feareth the Lord ſhall " direct his friendſhip aright: for as he is, " ſo ſhall his neighbour be alſo."—In the ſame admirable book, you will find directions how to chooſe and to preſerve a friend. Indeed there is hardly a circumſtance in life, concerning which you may not there meet with the beſt advice imaginable. Caution in making friendſhips is particularly recommended.—* " Be in peace with many, ne- " verthelefs have but one counſellor of a " thouſand.—If thou wouldſt get a friend, " prove him firſt, and be not haſty to cre- " dit him; for ſome man is a friend for his " own occaſion, and will not abide in the " day of trouble. And there is a friend " who, being turned to enmity and ſtrife, " will diſcover thy reproach." Again— " Some friend is a companion at the table, " and will not continue in the day of thy " affliction; but in thy proſperity he will " be as thyſelf, and will be bold over thy

* Ecclus. vi.

" ſervants:

" ſervants: if thou be brought low, he " will be againſt thee, and will hide him- " ſelf from thy face."— Chap. ix. 10— " Forſake not an old friend; for the new " is not comparable to him—A new friend " is as new wine; when it is old, thou " ſhalt drink it with pleaſure."

When you have diſcreetly choſen, the next point is how to preſerve your friend. Numbers complain of the ficklenes and ingratitude of thoſe on whom they beſtowed their affection; but few examine, whether what they complain of is not owing to themſelves. Affection is not like a portion of freehold land, which when once ſettled upon you is a poſſeſſion for ever, without further trouble on your part. If you grow leſs deſerving, or leſs attentive to pleaſe, you muſt expect to ſee the effects of your remiſſneſs, in the gradual decline of your friend's eſteem and attachment. Reſentment and reproaches will not recall what you have loſt; but, on the contrary, will haſten the diſſolution of every remaining tye. The beſt remedy is, to renew your care and aſſiduity to deſerve

and cultivate affection, without ſeeming to have perceived its abatement. Jealouſy and diſtruſt are the bane of friendſhip, whoſe eſſence is eſteem and affiance. But if jealouſy is expreſſed by unkind upbraidings, or, what is worſe, by cold haughty looks and inſolent contempt, it can hardly fail, if often repeated, to realize the misfortune, which at firſt perhaps was imaginary. Nothing can be more an antidote to affection than ſuch behaviour, or than the cauſe of it, which, in reality, is nothing but pride; though the jealous perſon would fain attribute it to uncommon tenderneſs and delicacy: But tenderneſs is never ſo expreſſed; it is indeed deeply ſenſible of unkindneſs, but it cannot be unkind;—it may ſubſiſt with anger, but not with contempt;—it may be weakened, or even killed, by ingratitude; but it cannot be changed into hatred. Remember always, that if you would be *loved*, you muſt be *amiable*. Habit may indeed, for a time, ſupply the deficiency of merit: what we have long loved, we do not eaſily ceaſe to love; but habit will at length be conquered by frequent

quent diſguſts. — " * Whoſo caſteth a ſtone " at the birds, frayeth them away; and he " that upbraideth his friend, breaketh friend- " ſhip. Though thou dreweſt a ſword at " thy friend, yet deſpair not, for there may " be a returning to favour. — If thou haſt " opened thy mouth againſt thy friend, fear " not, for there may be a reconciliation; ex- " cept for *upbraiding*, or *pride*, or *diſcloſing* " *of ſecrets*, or a *treacherous wound*,—for, for " theſe things every friend will depart."

I have hitherto ſpoken of a friend in the ſingular number, rather in compliance with the notions of moſt writers, who have treated of friendſhip, and who generally ſuppoſe it can have but one object, than from my own ideas. The higheſt kind of friendſhip is indeed confined to one;—I mean the conjugal—which, in its perfection, is ſo entire and abſolute an union, of intereſt, will, and affection, as no other connection can ſtand in competition with. But there are various degrees of friendſhip, which can admit of ſeveral objects, eſteemed, and delighted in, for different qua-

* Eccluſ. xxii. 20.

lities—and whoſe ſeparate rights are perfectly compatible. Perhaps it is not poſſible to love two perſons exactly in the ſame degree; yet, the difference may be ſo ſmall, that none of the parties can be certain on which ſide the ſcale preponderates.

It is a narrowneſs of mind to wiſh to confine your friend's affection ſolely to yourſelf; ſince you are conſcious that, however perfect your attachment may be, you cannot poſſibly ſupply to her all the bleſſings ſhe may derive from ſeveral friends, who may each love her as well as you do, and may each contribute largely to her happineſs. If ſhe depends on you alone for all the comforts and advantages of friendſhip, your abſence or death may leave her deſolate and forlorn. If therefore you prefer her good to your own ſelfiſh gratification, you ſhould rather ſtrive to multiply her friends, and be ready to embrace in your affections all who love her, and deſerve her love: this generoſity will bring its own reward, by multiplying the ſources of your pleaſures and ſupports; and your firſt friend will love you the more for ſuch an endearing proof of the

exten:

extent of your affection, which can ſtretch to receive all who are dear to her. But if, on the contrary, every mark of eſteem ſhewn to another excites uneaſineſs or reſentment in you, the perſon you love muſt ſoon feel her connection with you a burden and reſtraint. She can own no obligation to ſo ſelfiſh an attachment; nor can her tenderneſs be increaſed by that which leſſens her eſteem. If ſhe is really fickle and ungrateful, ſhe is not worth your reproaches: if not, ſhe muſt be reaſonably offended by ſuch injurious imputations.

You do not want to be told, that the ſtricteſt fidelity is required in friendſhip: and though poſſibly inſtances might be brought, in which even the ſecret of a friend muſt be ſacrificed to the calls of juſtice and duty, yet theſe are rare and doubtful caſes, and we may venture to pronounce that "* Whoſo diſcovereth ſecrets, loſeth his credit, and "ſhall never find a friend to his mind."— "Love thy friend, and be faithful unto him: "but if thou bewrayeſt his ſecrets, follow no "more after him. — For as a man that hath

* Eccluſ. xxvii. 16.

" deſtroyed his enemy, ſo haſt thou deſtroyed
" the love of thy friend. — As one that let-
" teth a bird go out of his hand, ſo haſt thou
" let thy neighbour go. — Follow no more
" after him, for he is too far off; he is as a
" roe eſcaped out of the ſnare. — As for a
" wound it may be bound up; and after re-
" vilings there may be reconcilement; but he
" that bewrayeth ſecrets, is without hope."

But, in order to reconcile this inviolable fidelity with the duty you owe to yourſelf or others, you muſt carefully guard againſt being made the repoſitory of ſuch ſecrets as are not fit to be kept. If your friend ſhould engage in any unlawful purſuit—if, for inſtance, ſhe ſhould intend to carry on an affair of love, unknown to her parents — you muſt firſt uſe your utmoſt endeavours to diſſuade her from it; and, if ſhe perſiſts, poſitively and ſolemnly declare againſt being a confident in ſuch a caſe. Suffer her not to ſpeak to you on the ſubject, and warn her to forbear acquainting you with any ſtep ſhe may propoſe to take towards a marriage unſanctified by parental approbation. Tell her, you would think it

your

your duty to apprize her parents of the danger into which ſhe was throwing herſelf. However unkindly ſhe may take this at the time, ſhe will certainly eſteem and love you the more for it, whenever ſhe recovers a ſenſe of her duty, or experiences the ſad effects of ſwerving from it.

There is another caſe, which I ſhould not chooſe to ſuppoſe poſſible, in addreſſing myſelf to ſo young a perſon, was it not that too many inſtances of it have of late been expoſed to public animadverſion: I mean the caſe of a married woman, who encourages or tolerates the addreſſes of a lover. May no ſuch perſon be ever called a friend of yours! but if ever one whom, when innocent, you had loved, ſhould fall into ſo fatal an error, I can only ſay that, after proper remonſtrances, you muſt immediately withdraw from all intimacy and confidence with her. Nor let the abſurd pretence of *innocent intentions*, in ſuch circumſtances, prevail with you to lend your countenance, a moment, to diſgraceful conduct. There cannot be innocence, in any degree of indulgence to unlawful paſſion. The ſacred

obligations of marriage are very ill underſtood by the wife, who can think herſelf innocent, while ſhe parlies with a lover, or with love—and who does not ſhut her heart and ears againſt the moſt diſtant approaches of either. A virtuous wife—though ſhe ſhould be ſo unhappy as not to be ſecured by having her ſtrongeſt affections fixed on her huſband—will never admit an idea of any other man, in the light of a lover; but, if ſuch an idea ſhould unawares intrude into her mind, ſhe would inſtantly ſtifle it, before it grew ſtrong enough to give her much uneaſineſs. Not to the moſt intimate friend—hardly to her own ſoul—would ſhe venture to confeſs a weakneſs, ſhe would ſo ſincerely abhor. Whenever therefore ſuch infidelity of heart is made a ſubject of confidence, depend upon it the corruption has ſpread far, and has been faultily indulged. Enter not into her counſels: Shew her the danger ſhe is in, and then, withdraw yourſelf from it, whilſt you are yet unſullied by contagion.

It has been ſuppoſed a duty of friendſhip to lay open every thought and every feeling of the

the heart to our friend. But I have juſt mentioned a caſe, in which this is not only unneceſſary but wrong. A diſgraceful inclination, which we reſolve to conquer, ſhould be concealed from every body; and is more eaſily ſubdued when denied the indulgence of talking of its object; and, I think, there may be other inſtances, in which it would be moſt prudent to keep our thoughts concealed even from our deareſt friend. Some things I would communicate to one friend, and not to another, whom perhaps I loved better, becauſe I might know that my firſt friend was not ſo well qualified as the other to counſel me on that particular ſubject: a natural bias on her mind, ſome prevailing opinion, or ſome connection with perſons concerned, might make her an improper confident with regard to one particular, though qualified to be ſo, on all other occaſions.

The confidence of friendſhip is indeed one of its ſweeteſt pleaſures and greateſt advantages. The human heart often ſtands in need of ſome kind and faithful partner of its cares, in whom it may repoſe all its weakneſſes, and

with whom it is ſure of finding the tendereſt ſympathy. Far be it from me to ſhut up the heart with cold diſtruſt, and rigid caution, or to adopt the odious maxim, that "we "ſhould live with a friend, as if he were one "day to become an enemy." But we muſt not wholly abandon prudence in any ſort of connection; ſince when every guard is laid aſide, our unbounded openneſs may injure others as well as ourſelves. Secrets entruſted to us muſt be ſacredly kept even from our neareſt friend; for we have no right to diſpoſe of the ſecrets of others.

If there is danger in making an improper choice of friends, my dear child, how much more fatal would it be to miſtake in a ſtronger kind of attachment — in that which leads to an irrevocable engagement for life! yet ſo much more is the underſtanding blinded, when once the fancy is captivated, that it ſeems a deſperate undertaking, to convince a girl in love that ſhe has miſtaken the character of the man ſhe prefers.

If the paſſions would wait for the deciſion of judgment, and if a young woman could have

have the ſame opportunities of examining into the real character of her lover, as into that of a female candidate for her friendſhip, the ſame rules might direct you in the choice of both; for, marriage being the higheſt ſtate of friendſhip, the qualities requiſite in a friend are ſtill more important in a huſband. But young women know ſo little of the world, eſpecially of the other ſex, and ſuch pains are uſually taken to deceive them, that they are every way unqualified to chooſe for themſelves, upon their own judgment. Many a heart-ach ſhall I feel for you, my ſweet girl, if I live a few years longer!—Since, not only all your happineſs in this world, but your advancement in religion and virtue, or your apoſtacy from every good principle you have been taught, will probably depend on the companion you fix to for life. Happy will it be for you if you are wiſe and modeſt enough to withdraw from temptation, and preſerve your heart free and open to receive the juſt recommendation of your parents: farther than a recommendation, I dare ſay they will never go, in an affair, which, though it ſhould be begun by

by them, ought never to be proceeded in, without your free concurrence.

Whatever romantic notions you may hear, or read of, depend upon it, thoſe matches are the happieſt which are made on rational grounds — on ſuitableneſs of character, degree, and fortune—on mutual eſteem, and the proſpect of a real and permanent friendſhip. Far be it from me, to adviſe you to marry where you do not love;—a mercenary marriage is a deteſtable proſtitution:—But, on the other hand, an union formed upon mere perſonal liking, without the requiſite foundation of eſteem, without the ſanction of parental approbation, and, conſequently, without the bleſſing of God, can be productive of nothing but miſery and ſhame. The paſſion, to which every conſideration of duty and prudence is ſacrificed, inſtead of ſupplying the loſs of all other advantages, will ſoon itſelf be changed into mutual diſtruſt — repentance — reproaches — and finally perhaps into hatred. The diſtreſſes it brings will be void of every conſolation: you will have diſguſted the friends who ſhould be your ſupport—debaſed yourſelf in the eyes

of

of the world — and, what is much worſe, in your own eyes; and even in thoſe of your huſband: above all, you will have offended that God, who alone can ſhield you from calamity.

From an act like this, I truſt, your duty and gratitude to your kind parents—the firſt of duties next to that we owe to God, and inſeparably connected with it—will effectually preſerve you. But moſt young people think they have fulfilled their duty, if they refrain from actually marrying againſt prohibition. They ſuffer their affections, and even perhaps their word of honour to be engaged, without conſulting their parents: yet ſatisfy themſelves with reſolving not to marry without their conſent: not conſidering that, beſides the wretched, uſeleſs, uncomfortable ſtate they plunge *themſelves* into, when they contract an hopeleſs engagement, they muſt likewiſe involve a *parent* in the miſerable dilemma of either giving a forced conſent againſt his judgment, or of ſeeing his beloved child pine away her prime of life in fruitleſs anxiety — ſeeing her accuſe him of tyranny, becauſe he reſtrains her from certain ruin—ſeeing her affections alienated from

from her family—and all her thoughts engroſſed by one object, to the deſtruction of her health and ſpirits and of all her improvements and occupations. What a cruel alternative for parents, whoſe happineſs is bound up with that of their child!—The time to conſult them is before you have given a lover the leaſt encouragement; nor ought you to liſten a moment to the man, who would wiſh you to keep his addreſſes ſecret; ſince he thereby ſhews himſelf conſcious that they are not fit to be encouraged.

But perhaps I have ſaid enough on this ſubject at preſent; though, if ever advice on ſuch a topic can be of uſe, it muſt be before paſſion has got poſſeſſion of the heart and ſilenced both reaſon and principle. Fix therefore in your mind, as deeply as poſſible, thoſe rules of duty and prudence, which now ſeem reaſonable to you, that they may be at hand in the hour of trial, and ſave you from the miſeries, in which ſtrong affections, unguided by diſcretion, involve ſo many of our ſex.

If you love virtue ſincerely, you will be incapable of loving an openly vicious character.

But,

But, alas!—your innocent heart may be eaſily enſnared by an artful one—and from this danger nothing can ſecure you but the experience of thoſe, to whoſe guidance God has entruſted you: may you be wiſe enough to make uſe of it!—So will you have the faireſt chance of attaining the beſt bleſſings this world can afford, in a faithful and virtuous union with a worthy man, who may direct your ſteps in ſafety and honour through this life, and partake with you the rewards of virtue in that which is to come. But, if this happy lot ſhould be denied you, do not be afraid of a ſingle life. A worthy woman is never deſtitute of valuable friends, who in a great meaſure ſupply to her the want of nearer connections. She can never be ſlighted or diſeſteemed, while her good temper and benevolence render her a bleſſing to her companions. Nay, ſhe muſt be honoured by all perſons of ſenſe and virtue, for preferring the ſingle ſtate to an union unworthy of her. The calamities of an unhappy marriage are ſo much greater than can befal a ſingle perſon, that the unmarried woman may find abundant argument to be contented

tented with her condition, when pointed out to her by Providence. Whether married or ſingle, if your firſt care is to pleaſe God, you will undoubtedly be a bleſſed creature;—"For that which he delights in *muſt be happy.*" —How earneſtly I wiſh you this happineſs, you can never know, unleſs you could read the heart of

your truly affectionate.

LETTER VI.

THE next great point of importance to your future happineſs, my dear, is what your parents have, doubtleſs, been continually attentive to from your infancy, as it is impoſſible to undertake it too early—I mean the due Regulation of your Temper. Though you are in great meaſure indebted to their forming hands for whatever is good in it, you are ſenſible, no doubt, as every human creature is, of propenſities to ſome infirmity of temper, which it

it muſt now be *your own* care to correct and to ſubdue; otherwiſe the pains that have hitherto been taken with you may all become fruitleſs: and, when you are your own miſtreſs, you may relapſe into thoſe faults, which were originally in your nature, and which will require to be diligently watched and kept under, through the whole courſe of your life.

If you conſider, that the conſtant tenor of the goſpel precepts is to promote love, peace, and good-will amongſt men, you will not doubt that the cultivation of an amiable diſpoſition is a great part of your religious duty; ſince nothing leads more directly to the breach of charity, and to the injury and moleſtation of our fellow creatures, than the indulgence of an ill temper. Do not therefore think lightly of the offences you may commit, for want of a due command over it, or ſuppoſe yourſelf reſponſible for them to your fellow creatures only; but, be aſſured, you muſt give a ſtrict account of them all to the Supreme Governor of the world, who has made this a great part of your appointed trial upon earth.

A woman, bred up in a religious manner, placed

placed above the reach of want and out of the way of ſordid or ſcandalous vices, can have but few temptations to the flagrant breach of the divine laws. It particularly concerns her therefore to underſtand them in their full import, and to conſider, how far ſhe treſpaſſes againſt them, by ſuch actions as appear trivial, when compared with murder, adultery, and theft, but which become of very great importance, by being frequently repeated, and occurring in the daily tranſactions of life.

The principal virtues or vices of a woman muſt be of a private and domeſtic kind. Within the circle of her own family and dependants lies her ſphere of action—the ſcene of almoſt all thoſe taſks and trials, which muſt determine her character, and her fate, here, and hereafter. Reflect, for a moment, how much the happineſs of her huſband, children, and ſervants, muſt depend on her temper, and you will ſee that the greateſt good, or evil, which ſhe ever may have in her power to do, may ariſe from her correcting or indulging its infirmities.

Though I wiſh the principle of duty towards God

God to be your ruling motive in the exerciſe of every virtue, yet, as human nature ſtands in need of all poſſible helps, let us not forget how eſſential it is to preſent happineſs, and to the enjoyment of this life, to cultivate ſuch a temper as is likewiſe indiſpenſably requiſite to the attainment of higher felicity in the life to come. The greateſt outward bleſſings cannot afford enjoyment to a mind ruffled and uneaſy within itſelf. A fit of ill humour will ſpoil the fineſt entertainment, and is as real a torment as the moſt painful diſeaſe. Another unavoidable conſequence of ill temper is the diſlike and averſion of all who are witneſſes to it, and, perhaps, the deep and laſting reſentment of thoſe, who ſuffer from its effects. We all, from ſocial or ſelf-love, earneſtly deſire the eſteem and affection of our fellow-creatures; and indeed our condition makes them ſo neceſſary to us, that the wretch, who has forfeited them, muſt feel deſolate and undone, deprived of all the beſt enjoyments and comforts the world can afford, and given up to his inward miſery, unpitied and ſcorned. But this never can be the fate of a good-na-

tured perſon: whatever faults he may have, they will generally be treated with lenity; he will find an advocate in every human heart; his errors will be lamented rather than abhorred; and his virtues will be viewed in the faireſt point of light: His good humour, without the help of great talents or acquirements, will make his company preferable to that of the moſt brilliant genius, in whom this quality is wanting: in ſhort, it is almoſt impoſſible that you can be ſincerely beloved by any body, without this engaging property, whatever other excellencies you may poſſeſs; but, with it, you will ſcarcely fail of finding ſome friends and favourers, even though you ſhould be deſtitute of almoſt every other advantage.

Perhaps you will ſay, "all this is very true, "but our tempers are not in our own power "—we are made with different diſpoſitions, "and, if mine is not amiable, it is rather my "unhappineſs than my fault." This, my dear, is commonly ſaid by thoſe who will not take the trouble to correct themſelves. Yet, be aſſured, it is a deluſion, and will not avail in our juſtification before him, "who know-

"eth

" eth whereof we are made," and of what we are capable. It is true, we are not all equally happy in our diſpoſitions; but human virtue conſiſts in cheriſhing and cultivating every good inclination, and in checking and ſubduing every propenſity to evil. If you had been born with a bad temper, it might have been made a good one, at leaſt with regard to its outward effects, by education, reaſon, and principle: and, though you are ſo happy as to have a good one while young, do not ſuppoſe it will always continue ſo, if you neglect to maintain a proper command over it. Power, ſickneſs, diſappointments, or worldly cares, may corrupt and embitter the fineſt diſpoſition, if they are not counteracted by reaſon and religion.

It is obſerved, that every temper is inclined, in ſome degree, either to paſſion, peeviſhneſs, or obſtinacy. Many are ſo unfortunate as to be inclined to each of the three in turn: it is neceſſary therefore to watch the bent of our nature, and to apply the remedies proper for the infirmity to which we are moſt liable. With regard to the firſt, it is ſo injurious to ſociety, and ſo odious in itſelf, eſpecially in

the female character, that one would think ſhame alone would be ſufficient to preſerve a young woman from giving way to it; for it is as unbecoming her character to be betrayed into ill behaviour by *paſſion*, as by *intoxication*, and ſhe ought to be aſhamed of the one, as much as of the other. Gentleneſs, meekneſs, and patience, are her peculiar diſtinctions, and an enraged woman is one of the moſt diſguſting ſights in nature.

It is plain, from experience, that the moſt paſſionate people can command themſelves, when they have a motive ſufficiently ſtrong—ſuch as the preſence of thoſe they fear, or to whom they particularly deſire to recommend themſelves: it is therefore no excuſe to perſons, whom you have injured by unkind reproaches, and unjuſt aſperſions, to tell them you was in a paſſion: the allowing yourſelf to ſpeak to them in a paſſion is a proof of an inſolent diſreſpect, which the meaneſt of your fellow-creatures would have a right to reſent. When once you find yourſelf heated ſo far as to deſire to ſay what you know would be provoking and wounding to another, you ſhould

immediately reſolve either to be ſilent, or to quit the room, than to give utterance to any thing dictated by ſo bad an inclination. Be aſſured, you are then unfit to reaſon or to reprove, or to hear reaſon from others. It is therefore your part to retire from ſuch an occaſion of ſin; and wait till you are cool, before you preſume to judge of what has paſſed. By accuſtoming yourſelf thus to conquer and diſappoint your anger, you will, by degrees, find it grow weak and manageable, ſo as to leave your reaſon at liberty. You will be able to reſtrain your tongue from evil, and your looks and geſtures from all expreſſions of violence and ill-will. Pride, which produces ſo many evils in the human mind, is the great ſource of paſſion. Whoever cultivates in himſelf a proper humility, a due ſenſe of his own faults and inſufficiencies, and a due reſpect for others, will find but ſmall temptation to violent or unreaſonable anger.

In the caſe of real injuries, which juſtify and call for reſentment, there is a noble and generous kind of anger, a proper and neceſſary part of our nature, which has nothing in

it ſinful or degrading. I would not wiſh you inſenſible to this; for the perſon, who feels not an injury, muſt be incapable of being properly affected by benefits. With thoſe, who treat you ill without provocation, you ought to maintain your own dignity. But, in order to do this, whilſt you ſhew a ſenſe of their improper behaviour, you muſt preſerve calmneſs, and even good-breeding — and thereby convince them of the impotence as well as injuſtice of their malice. You muſt alſo weigh every circumſtance with candour and charity, and conſider whether your ſhewing the reſentment deſerved may not produce ill conſequences to innocent perſons—as is almoſt always the caſe in family quarrels—and whether it may not occaſion the breach of ſome duty, or neceſſary connection, to which you ought to ſacrifice even your juſt reſentments. Above all things, take care that a particular offence to you does not make you unjuſt to the general character of the offending perſon. Generous anger does not preclude eſteem for whatever is really eſtimable, nor does it deſtroy good-will to the perſon of its object: It even inſpires the

the deſire of overcoming him by benefits, and wiſhes to inflict no other puniſhment than the regret of having injured one, who deſerved his kindneſs: it is always placable, and ready to be reconciled, as ſoon as the offender is convinced of his error; nor can any ſubſequent injury provoke it to recur to paſt diſobligations, which had been once forgiven. But it is perhaps unneceſſary to give rules for this caſe: The conſciouſneſs of injured innocence naturally produces dignity, and uſually prevents exceſs of anger. Our paſſion is moſt unruly, when we are conſcious of blame, and when we apprehend that we have laid ourſelves open to contempt. Where we know we have been wrong, the leaſt injuſtice in the degree of blame imputed to us, excites our bittereſt reſentment; but, where we know ourſelves faultleſs, the ſharpeſt accuſation excites pity or contempt, rather than rage. Whenever therefore you feel yourſelf very angry, ſuſpect yourſelf to be in the wrong, and reſolve to ſtand the deciſion of your own conſcience before you caſt upon another the puniſhment, which is perhaps due to yourſelf. This ſelf-exami-

nation will at leaſt give you time to cool, and, if you are juſt, will diſpoſe you to balance your own wrong with that of your antagoniſt, and to ſettle the account with him on equal terms.

Peeviſhneſs, though not ſo violent and fatal in its immediate effects, is ſtill more unamiable than paſſion, and, if poſſible, more deſtructive of happineſs, in as much as it operates more continually. Though the fretful man injures us leſs, he diſguſts us more than the paſſionate one—becauſe he betrays a low and little mind, intent on trifles, and engroſſed by a paltry ſelf-love, which knows not how to bear the very apprehenſion of any inconvenience. It is ſelf-love then, which we muſt combat, when we find ourſelves aſſaulted by this infirmity; and, by voluntarily enduring inconveniencies, we ſhall habituate ourſelves to bear them with eaſe, and good-humour, when occaſioned by others. Perhaps this is the beſt kind of religious mortification, as the chief end of denying ourſelves any innocent indulgences muſt be to acquire a habit of command over our paſſions and inclinations, particularly ſuch as are likely to lead us into evil. Another

ther method of conquering this enemy is to abſtract our minds from that attention to trifling circumſtances, which uſually creates this uneaſineſs. Thoſe who are engaged in high and important purſuits are very little affected by ſmall inconveniencies. The man whoſe head is full of ſtudious thought, or whoſe heart is full of care, will eat his dinner without knowing whether it was well or ill dreſſed, or whether it was ſerved punctually at the hour or not: and though abſence from the common things of life is far from deſirable—eſpecially in a woman—yet too minute and anxious an attention to them ſeldom fails to produce a teazing, mean, and fretful diſpoſition. I would therefore wiſh your mind to have always ſome objects in purſuit worthy of it, that it may not be engroſſed by ſuch as are in themſelves ſcarce worth a moment's anxiety. It is chiefly in the decline of life, when amuſements fail, and when the more importunate paſſions ſubſide, that this infirmity is obſerved to grow upon us—and perhaps it will ſeldom fail to do ſo, unleſs carefully watched and counteracted by reaſon.

reaſon. We muſt then endeavour to ſubſtitute ſome purſuits in the place of thoſe, which can only engage us in the beginning of our courſe. The purſuit of glory and happineſs in another life, by every means of improving and exalting our own minds, becomes more and more intereſting to us, the nearer we draw to the end of all ſublunary enjoyments. Reading, reflection, rational converſation, and, above all, converſing with God, by prayer and meditation, may preſerve us from taking that anxious intereſt in the little comforts and conveniencies of our remaining days, which uſually gives birth to ſo much fretfulneſs in old people. But though the aged and infirm are moſt liable to this evil—and they alone are to be pitied for it—yet we ſometimes ſee the young, the healthy, and thoſe who enjoy moſt outward bleſſings, inexcuſably guilty of it. The ſmalleſt diſappointment in pleaſure, or difficulty in the moſt trifling employment, will put wilful young people out of temper, and their very amuſements frequently become ſources of vexation and peeviſhneſs. How often have

I ſeen

I ſeen a girl, preparing for a ball, or for ſome other public appearance — unable to ſatisfy her own vanity — fret over every ornament ſhe put on, quarrel with her maid, with her clothes, her hair; and growing ſtill more unlovely as ſhe grew more croſs, be ready to fight with her looking-glaſs for not making her as handſome as ſhe wiſhed to be. She did not conſider that the traces of this ill humour on her countenance would be a greater diſadvantage to her appearance than any defect in her dreſs — or even than the plaineſt features enlivened by joy and good humour. There is a degree of reſignation neceſſary even to the enjoyment of pleaſure; we muſt be ready and willing to give up ſome part of what we could wiſh for, before we can enjoy that which is indulged to us. I have no doubt that ſhe, who frets all the while ſhe is dreſſing for an aſſembly, will ſuffer ſtill greater uneaſineſs when ſhe is there. The ſame craving reſtleſs vanity will there endure a thouſand mortifications, which, in the midſt of ſeeming pleaſure, will ſecretly corrode her heart; whilſt the meek and humble

ble generally find more gratification than they expected, and return home pleased and enlivened from every scene of amusement, though they could have staid away from it with perfect ease and contentment.

Sullenness, or obstinacy, is perhaps a worse fault of temper than either of the former—and, if indulged, may end in the most fatal extremes of stubborn melancholy, malice, and revenge. The resentment which, instead of being expressed, is nursed in secret, and continually aggravated by the imagination, will, in time, become the ruling passion; and then, how horrible must be his case, whose kind and pleasurable affections are all swallowed up by the tormenting as well as detestable sentiments of hatred and revenge!—"* Admonish thy friend, peradventure he "hath not done it: or, if he hath, that he "do it no more.—Admonish thy friend, per- "adventure he hath not said it: or, if he "hath, that he speak it not again."—Brood not over a resentment, which perhaps was at first ill grounded, and which is undoubtedly

* Eccles. xix. 13.

heightened

heightened by an heated imagination. But, when you have firſt ſubdued your own temper, ſo as to be able to ſpeak calmly, reaſonably, and kindly, then expoſtulate with the perſon you ſuppoſe to be in fault—hear what ſhe has to ſay; and either reconcile yourſelf to her, or quiet your mind under the injury, by the principle of Chriſtian charity. But if it ſhould appear that you yourſelf have been moſt to blame, or if you have been in an error, acknowledge it fairly and handſomely; if you feel any reluctance to do ſo, be certain that it ariſes from pride, to conquer which is an abſolute duty.—"A ſoft anſwer turneth "away wrath," and a generous confeſſion oftentimes more than atones for the fault which requires it. Truth and juſtice demand that we ſhould acknowledge conviction, as ſoon as we feel it, and not maintain an erroneous opinion, or juſtify a wrong conduct, merely from the falſe ſhame of confeſſing our paſt ignorance. A falſe ſhame it undoubtedly is, and as impolitic as unjuſt, ſince your error is already ſeen by thoſe who endeavour to ſet you right; but your conviction, and the

the candour and generoſity of owning it freely, may ſtill be an honour to you, and would greatly recommend you to the perſon with whom you diſputed. With a diſpoſition ſtrongly inclined to ſullenneſs or obſtinacy, this muſt be a very painful exertion; and to make a perfect conqueſt over yourſelf at once may perhaps appear impracticable, whilſt the zeal of ſelf-juſtification, and the abhorrence of blame, are ſtrong upon you. But, if you are ſo unhappy as to yield to your infirmity, at one time, do not let this diſcourage you from renewing your efforts. Your mind will gain ſtrength from the conteſt, and your internal enemy will by degrees be forced to give ground. Be not afraid to revive the ſubject, as ſoon as you find yourſelf able to ſubdue your temper; and then frankly lay open the conflict you ſuſtained at the time: by this you will make all the amends in your power for your fault, and will certainly change the diſguſt you had given into pity at leaſt if not admiration. Nothing is more endearing than ſuch a confeſſion — and you will find ſuch a ſatisfaction in your own conſciouſneſs, and in the

the renewed tenderneſs and eſteem you will gain from the perſon concerned, that your taſk for the future will be made more eaſy, and your reluctance to be convinced, will on every occaſion grow leſs and leſs.

The love of truth, and a real deſire of improvement, ought to be the only motives of argumentation; and, where theſe are ſincere, no difficulty can be made of embracing the truth, as ſoon as it is perceived. But, in fact, people oftener diſpute from vanity and pride, which make it a grievous mortification to allow that we are the wiſer for what we have heard from another. To receive advice, reproof, and inſtruction, properly, is the ſureſt ſign of a ſincere and humble heart—and ſhews a greatneſs of mind, which commands our reſpect and reverence, while it appears ſo willingly to yield to us the ſuperiority.

Obſerve, notwithſtanding, that I do not wiſh you to hear of your faults without pain: Such an indifference would afford ſmall hopes of amendment. Shame and remorſe are the firſt ſteps to true repentance; yet we ſhould be willing to bear this pain, and thankful to

the kind hand that inflicts it for our good. Nor muſt we, by ſullen ſilence under it, leave our kind phyſician in doubt, whether the operation has taken effect or not, or whether it has not added another malady, inſtead of curing the firſt. You muſt conſider, that thoſe who tell you of your faults, if they do it from motives of kindneſs and not of malice, exert their friendſhip in a painful office, which muſt have coſt them as great an effort as it can be to you to acknowledge the ſervice; and, if you refuſe this encouragement, you cannot expect that any one, who is not abſolutely obliged to it by duty, will a ſecond time undertake ſuch an ill-requited trouble. What a loſs would this be to yourſelf! — how difficult would be our progreſs to that degree of perfection, which is neceſſary to our happineſs, was it not for the aſſiſtance we receive from each other! — this certainly is one of the means of grace held out to us by our merciful judge, and, if we reject it, we are anſwerable for all the miſcarriages we may fall into for want of it.

I know not, whether that ſtrange caprice, that

that inequality of taſte and behaviour, ſo commonly attributed to our ſex, may be properly called a fault of temper — as it ſeems not to be connected with, or ariſing from our animal frame, but to be rather the fruit of our own ſelf-indulgence, degenerating by degrees into ſuch a wantonneſs of will as knows not how to pleaſe itſelf. When, inſtead of regulating our actions by reaſon and principle, we ſuffer ourſelves to be guided by every ſlight and momentary impulſe of inclination, we ſhall, doubtleſs, appear ſo variable and inconſtant, that nobody can gueſs, by our behaviour to-day, what may be expected from us to-morrow; nor can we ourſelves tell whether what we delighted in a week ago, will now afford us the leaſt degree of pleaſure. It is in vain for others to attempt to pleaſe us—we cannot pleaſe ourſelves, though all we could wiſh for waits our choice: and thus does a capricious woman become "ſick "of herſelf, through very ſelfiſhneſs:" And, when this is the caſe, it is eaſy to judge how ſick others muſt be of her, and how contemptible and diſguſting ſhe muſt appear.

This wretched ſtate is the uſual conſequence of power and flattery. May my dear child never meet with the temptation of that exceſſive and ill-judged indulgence from a huſband, which ſhe has happily eſcaped from her parents, and which ſeldom fails to reduce a woman to the miſerable condition of a humoured child, always unhappy from having nobody's will to ſtudy but its own! The inſolence of ſuch demands for yourſelf, and ſuch diſregard to the choice and inclinations of others, can ſeldom fail to make you as many enemies as there are perſons obliged to bear with your humours; whilſt a compliant, reaſonable, and contented diſpoſition, would render you happy in yourſelf, and beloved by all your companions—particularly by thoſe, who live conſtantly with you; and, of what conſequence this is to your happineſs, a moment's reflection will convince you. Family friendſhips are the friendſhips made for us, if I may ſo ſpeak, by God himſelf. With the kindeſt intentions, he has knit the bands of family love, by indiſpenſable duties; and wretched are they who have burſt them aſunder

der by violence and ill-will, or worn them out by conſtant little diſobligations, and by the want of that attention to pleaſe, which th preſence of a ſtranger always inſpires, but which is ſo often ſhamefully neglected towards thoſe, whom it is moſt our duty and intereſt to pleaſe. May you, my dear, be wiſe enough to ſee that every faculty of entertainment, every engaging qualification, which you poſſeſs, is exerted to the beſt advantage for thoſe, whoſe love is of moſt importance to you — for thoſe who live under the ſame roof, and with whom you are connected for life, either by the ties of blood, or by the ſtill more ſacred obligations of a voluntary engagement.

To make you the delight and darling of your family, ſomething more is required than barely to be exempt from ill temper and troubleſome humours. The ſincere and genuine ſmiles of complacency and love muſt adorn your countenance. That ready compliance, that alertneſs to aſſiſt and oblige, which demonſtrates true affection, muſt animate your behaviour, and endear your moſt common ac-

tions. Politeneſs muſt accompany your greateſt familiarities, and reſtrain you from every thing that is really offenſive, or which can give a moment's unneceſſary pain. Converſation, which is ſo apt to grow dull and inſipid in families, nay, in ſome to be almoſt wholly laid aſide, muſt be cultivated with the frankneſs and openneſs of friendſhip, and by the mutual communication of whatever may conduce to the improvement or innocent entertainment of each other.

Reading, whether apart or in common, will furniſh uſeful and pleaſing ſubjects; and the ſprightlineſs of youth will naturally inſpire harmleſs mirth and native humour, if encouraged by a mutual deſire of diverting each other, and making the hours paſs agreeably in your own houſe: every amuſement that offers will be heightened by the participation of theſe dear companions, and by talking over every incident together and every object of pleaſure. If you have any acquired talent of entertainment, ſuch as muſic, painting, or the like, your own family are thoſe, before whom you ſhould moſt wiſh to excel,

and

and for whom you ſhould always be ready to exert yourſelf; not ſuffering the accompliſhments which you have gained, perhaps by their means, and at their expence, to lie dormant, till the arrival of a ſtranger gives you ſpirit in the performance. Where this laſt is the caſe, you may be ſure vanity is the only motive of the exertion: A ſtranger will praiſe you more: But how little ſenſibility has that heart, which is not more gratified by the ſilent pleaſure painted on the countenance of a partial parent, or of an affectionate brother, than by the empty compliments of a viſiter, who is perhaps inwardly more diſpoſed to criticiſe and ridicule than to admire you!

I have been longer in this letter than I intended, yet it is with difficulty I can quit the ſubject, becauſe I think it is ſeldom ſufficiently inſiſted on, either in books or in ſermons — and becauſe there are many perſons weak enough to believe themſelves in a ſafe and innocent courſe of life, whilſt they are daily harraſſing every body about them by their vexatious humours. But, you will, I hope, conſtantly bear in mind, that you can

never treat a fellow-creature unkindly, without offending the kind Creator and Father of all — and that you can no way render yourſelf ſo acceptable to him as by ſtudying to promote the happineſs of others, in every inſtance, ſmall as well as great.—The favour of God, and the love of your companions, will ſurely be deemed rewards ſufficient to animate your moſt fervent endeavours; yet this is not all: the diſpoſition of mind, which I would recommend, is its own reward, and is in itſelf eſſential to happineſs. Cultivate it therefore, my dear child, with your utmoſt diligence — and, watch the ſymptoms of ill-temper, as they riſe, with a firm reſolution to conquer them, before they are even perceived by any other perſon. In every ſuch inward conflict, call upon your Maker, to aſſiſt the feeble nature he hath given you—and ſacrifice to *Him* every feeling that would tempt you to diſobedience: So will you at length attain that true Chriſtian meekneſs, which is bleſſed in the ſight of God and man; "which has the promiſe of this life as well "as of that which is to come." Then will

you

you pity, in others, thoſe infirmities, which you have conquered in yourſelf; and will think yourſelf as much bound to aſſiſt, by your patience and gentleneſs, thoſe who are ſo unhappy as to be under the dominion of evil paſſions, as you are to impart a ſhare of your riches to the poor and miſerable.

Adieu, my deareſt.

LETTER VII.

MY DEAR NIECE,

ECONOMY is ſo important a part of a woman's character, ſo neceſſary to her own happineſs, and ſo eſſential to her performing properly the duties of a wife and of a mother, that it ought to have the precedence of all other accompliſhments, and take its rank next to the firſt duties of life. It is, moreover, an *art* as well as a *virtue* — and, many well-meaning perſons, from ignorance, or from inconſideration, are ſtrangely defici-

ent in it. Indeed it is too often wholly neglected in a young woman's education—and, ſhe is ſent from her father's houſe to govern a family, without the leaſt degree of that knowledge, which ſhould qualify her for it: this is the ſource of much inconvenience; for though experience and attention may ſupply, by degrees, the want of inſtruction, yet this requires time—the family, in the mean time, may get into habits, which are very difficult to alter; and, what is worſe, the huſband's opinion of his wife's incapacity may be fixed too ſtrongly to ſuffer him ever to think juſtly of her gradual improvements. I would therefore earneſtly adviſe you to make uſe of every opportunity you can find, for the laying in ſome ſtore of knowledge on this ſubject, before you are called upon to the practice; by obſerving what paſſes before you—by conſulting prudent and experienced miſtreſſes of families — and by entering in a book a memorandum of every new piece of intelligence you acquire: you may afterwards compare theſe with more mature obſervations, and you can make additions and corrections

rections as you see occasion. I hope it will not be long before your mother entrusts you with some part, at least, of the management of your father's house. Whilst you are under her eye, your ignorance cannot do much harm, though the relief to her at first may not be near so considerable as the benefit to yourself.

Economy consists of so many branches, some of which descend to such minutenesses, that it is impossible for me in writing to give you particular directions. The rude outlines may perhaps be described, and I shall be happy if I can furnish you with any hint that may hereafter be usefully applied.

The first and greatest point is to lay out your general plan of living in a just proportion to your fortune and rank: if these two will not coincide, the last must certainly give way; for, if you have right principles, you cannot fail of being wretched under the sense of the injustice as well as danger of spending beyond your income, and your distress will be continually increasing. No mortifications, which you can suffer from retrenching in

in your appearance, can be comparable to this unhappineſs. If you would enjoy the real comforts of affluence, you ſhould lay your plan conſiderably within your income; not for the pleaſure of amaſſing wealth—though, where there is a growing family, it is an abſolute duty to lay by ſomething every year—but to provide for contingencies, and to have the power of indulging your choice in the diſpoſal of the overplus—either in innocent pleaſures, or to increaſe your funds for charity and generoſity, which are in fact the true funds of pleaſure. In ſome circumſtances indeed, this would not be prudent: there are profeſſions in which a man's ſucceſs greatly depends on his making ſome figure, where the bare ſuſpicion of poverty would bring on the reality. If, by marriage, you ſhould be placed in ſuch a ſituation, it will be your duty to exert all your ſkill in the management of your income: Yet, even in this caſe, I would not ſtrain to the utmoſt for appearance, but would chooſe my models among the moſt prudent and moderate of my own claſs; and, be contented with ſlower advancement,

vancement, for the ſake of ſecurity and peace of mind.

A contrary conduct is the ruin of many; and, in general, the wives of men in ſuch profeſſions might live in a more retired and frugal manner than they do, without any ill conſequence, if they did not make the ſcheme of advancing the ſucceſs of their huſbands an excuſe to themſelves for the indulgence of their own vanity and ambition.

Perhaps it may be ſaid, that the ſettling the general ſcheme of expences is ſeldom the wife's province, and that many men do not chooſe even to acquaint her with the real ſtate of their affairs. Where this is the caſe, a woman can be anſwerable for no more than is entruſted to her. But, I think it a very ill ſign, for one or both of the parties, where there is ſuch a want of openneſs, in what equally concerns them. As I truſt you will deſerve the confidence of your huſband, ſo I hope you will be allowed free conſultation with him on your mutual intereſts; and, I believe, there are few men, who would not hearken to reaſon on their own affairs, when they

they ſaw a wife ready and deſirous to give up her ſhare of vanities and indulgences, and only earneſt to promote the common good of the family.

In order to ſettle your plan, it will be neceſſary to make a pretty exact calculation: and if, from this time, you accuſtom yourſelf to calculations in all the little expences entruſted to you, you will grow expert and ready at them, and be able to gueſs very nearly, where certainty cannot be attained. Many articles of expence are regular and fixed; theſe may be valued exactly; and, by conſulting with experienced perſons, you may calculate nearly the amount of others: any material article of conſumption, in a family of any given number and circumſtances, may be eſtimated pretty nearly. Your own expences of clothes and pocket-money ſhould be ſettled and circumſcribed, that you may be ſure not to exceed the juſt proportion. I think it an admirable method to appropriate ſuch a portion of your income, as you judge proper to beſtow in charity, to be ſacredly kept for that purpoſe and no longer conſidered as your own.

By

By which means, you will avoid the temptation of giving leſs than you ought, through ſelfiſhneſs, or more than you ought, through good-nature or weakneſs. If your circumſtances allow of it, you might ſet apart another fund for acts of liberality or friendſhip, which do not come under the head of charity. The having ſuch funds ready at hand makes it eaſy and pleaſant to give; and, when acts of bounty are performed without effort, they are generally done more kindly and effectually. If you are obliged in conſcience to lay up for a family, the ſame method of an appropriated fund for ſaving will be of excellent uſe, as it will prevent that continual and often ineffectual anxiety, which a general deſire of ſaving, without having fixed the limits, is ſure to create.

Regularity of payments and accounts is eſſential to Economy:—your houſe-keeping ſhould be ſettled at leaſt once a week, and all the bills paid: all other tradeſmen ſhould be paid, at fartheſt, once a year. Indeed I think it more advantageous to pay oftener: but, if you make them truſt you longer, they

muſt either charge proportionably higher, or be loſers by your cuſtom. Numbers of them fail, every year, from the cruel cauſe of being obliged to give their cuſtomers ſo much longer credit than the dealers, from whom they take their goods, will allow to them. If people of fortune conſidered this, they would not defer their payments, from mere negligence, as they often do, to the ruin of whole families.

You muſt endeavour to acquire ſkill in purchaſing: in order to this, you ſhould begin now to attend to the prices of things, and take every proper opportunity of learning the real value of every thing, as well as the marks whereby you are to diſtinguiſh the good from the bad.

In your table, as in your dreſs, and in all other things, I wiſh you to aim at *propriety* and *neatneſs*, or, if your ſtate demands it, *elegance*, rather than *ſuperfluous figure*. To go beyond your ſphere, either in dreſs, or in the appearance of your table, indicates a greater fault in your character than to be too much within it. It is impoſſible to enter into the *minutiæ* of the table: good ſenſe and obſervation

ſervation on the beſt models muſt form your taſte, and a due regard to what you can afford muſt reſtrain it.

Ladies, who are fond of needle-work, generally chooſe to conſider that as a principal part of good houſewifery: and, though I cannot look upon it as of equal importance with the due regulation of a family, yet, in a middling rank, and with a moderate fortune, it is a neceſſary part of a woman's duty, and a conſiderable article in expence is ſaved by it. Many young ladies make almoſt *every thing* they wear; by which means they can make a genteel figure at a ſmall expence. This, in your ſtation, is the moſt profitable and deſirable kind of work; and, as much of it as you can do, conſiſtently with a due attention to your health, to the improvement of your mind, and to the diſcharge of other duties, I ſhould think highly commendable. But, as I do not wiſh you to impoſe on the world by your appearance, I ſhould be contented to ſee you worſe dreſſed, rather than ſee your whole time employed in preparations for it, or any of thoſe hours given to it, which are needful to make your body ſtrong and ac-

tive by exercise, or your mind rational by reading. Absolute idleness is inexcusable in a woman, because the needle is always at hand for those intervals in which she cannot be otherwise employed. If you are industrious, and if you keep good hours, you will find time for all your proper employments. Early rising, and a good disposition of time, is essential to economy. The necessary orders, and examination into household affairs, should be dispatched, as soon in the day, and as privately as possible, that they may not interrupt your husband or guests, or break in upon conversation, or reading, in the remainder of the day. If you defer any thing that is necessary, you may be tempted by company, or by unforeseen avocations, to forget, or to neglect it: hurry and irregularity will ensue, with expensive expedients to supply the defect.

There is in many people, and particularly in youth, a strange aversion to regularity—a desire to delay what ought to be done immediately, in order to do something else, which might as well be done afterwards. Be assured, it is of more consequence to you than

you

you can conceive, to get the better of this idle procraſtinating ſpirit, and to acquire habits of conſtancy and ſteadineſs, even in the moſt trifling matters: without them there can be no regularity, or conſiſtency of action or character — no dependance on your beſt intentions, which a ſudden humour may tempt you to lay aſide for a time, and which a thouſand unforeſeen accidents will afterwards render it more and more difficult to execute: no one can ſay what important conſequences may follow a trivial neglect of this kind. For example — I have known one of theſe *procraſtinators* diſoblige, and gradually loſe very valuable friends, by delaying to write to them ſo long, that, having no good excuſe to offer, ſhe could not get courage enough to write at all, and dropped their correſpondence entirely.

The neatneſs and order of your houſe and furniture is a part of Economy which will greatly affect your appearance and character, and to which you muſt yourſelf give attention, ſince it is not poſſible even for the *rich* and *great* to rely wholly on the care of ſervants, in ſuch points, without their being often neglected. The more magnificently a houſe is

furniſhed, the more one is diſguſted with that air of confuſion, which often prevails where attention is wanting in the owner. But, on the other hand, there is a kind of neatneſs, which gives a lady the air of a houſe-maid, and makes her exceſſively troubleſome to every body, and particularly to her huſband: in this, as in all other branches of Economy, I wiſh you to avoid all parade and buſtle. Thoſe ladies who pique themſelves on the particular excellence of neatneſs, are very apt to forget that the decent order of the houſe ſhould be deſigned to promote the convenience and pleaſure of thoſe who are to be in it; and that, if it is converted into a cauſe of trouble and conſtraint, their huſbands and gueſts would be happier without it. The love of fame, that univerſal paſſion, will ſometimes ſhew itſelf on ſtrangely inſignificant ſubjects; and a perſon, who acts for praiſe only, will always go beyond the mark in every thing. The beſt ſign of a houſe being well governed is that nobody's attention is called to any of the little affairs of it, but all goes on ſo well of courſe that one is not led to make remarks upon any thing, nor to obſerve any extraordinary

nary effort that produces the general reſult of eaſe and elegance, which prevails throughout.

Domeſtic Economy, and the credit and happineſs of a family, depend ſo much on the choice and proper regulation of ſervants, that it muſt be conſidered as an eſſential part both of prudence and duty. Thoſe who keep a great number of them, have a heavy charge on their conſciences, and ought to think themſelves in ſome meaſure reſponſible for the morals and happineſs of ſo many of their fellow-creatures, deſigned like themſelves for immortality. Indeed the cares of domeſtic management are by no means lighter to perſons of high rank and fortune, if they perform their duty, than to thoſe of a retired ſtation. It is with a family, as with a commonwealth, the more numerous and luxurious it becomes, the more difficult it is to govern it properly.—Though the great are placed above the little attentions and employments, to which a private gentlewoman muſt dedicate much of her time, they have a larger and more important ſphere of action, in which, if they are indolent

and neglectful, the whole government of their houſe and fortune muſt fall into irregularity. Whatever number of deputies they may employ to overlook their affairs, they muſt themſelves overlook thoſe deputies, and be ultimately anſwerable for the conduct of the whole. The characters of thoſe ſervants, who are entruſted with power over the reſt, cannot be too nicely enquired into; and the miſtreſs of the family muſt be ever watchful over their conduct—at the ſame time that ſhe muſt carefully avoid every appearance of ſuſpicion, which, whilſt it wounds and injures a worthy ſervant, only excites the artifice and cunning of an unjuſt one.

None, who pretend to be friends of religion and virtue, ſhould ever keep a domeſtic, however expert in buſineſs, whom they know to be guilty of immorality. How unbecoming a ſerious character is it, to ſay of ſuch an one, "he is a bad man, but a good ſervant!"—What a preference does it ſhew of private convenience to the intereſts of ſociety, which demand that vice ſhould be conſtantly diſcountenanced, eſpecially in every one's own houſe-

hold;

hold; and that the ſober, honeſt, and induſtrious, ſhould be ſure of finding encouragement and reward, in the houſes of thoſe who maintain reſpectable characters! Such perſons ſhould be invariably ſtrict and peremptory with regard to the behaviour of their ſervants, in every thing which concerns the general plan of domeſtic government — but ſhould by no means be ſevere on ſmall faults, ſince nothing ſo much weakens authority as frequent chiding. Whilſt they require preciſe obedience to their rules, they muſt prove by their general conduct, that theſe rules are the effect, not of humour, but of reaſon. It is wonderful that thoſe, who are careful to conceal their ill-temper from ſtrangers, ſhould be indifferent how peeviſh and even contemptibly capricious they appear before their ſervants, on whom their good-name ſo much depends, and from whom they can hope for no real reſpect, when their weakneſs is ſo apparent. When once a ſervant can ſay—"I cannot do any thing to "pleaſe my miſtreſs to-day" — all authority is loſt.

Thoſe, who continually change their ſer-

vants, and complain of perpetual ill-uſage, have good reaſon to believe that the fault is in themſelves, and that they do not know how to govern. Few indeed poſſeſs the ſkill to unite authority with kindneſs, or are capable of that ſteady and uniformly reaſonable conduct, which alone can maintain true dignity and command a willing and attentive obedience. Let us not forget that human nature is the ſame in all ſtations. If you can convince your ſervants, that you have a generous and conſiderate regard to their health, their intereſt, and their reaſonable gratifications—that you impoſe no commands but what are fit and right, nor ever reprove but with juſtice and temper—Why ſhould you imagine that they will be inſenſible to the good they receive, or whence ſuppoſe them incapable of eſteeming and prizing ſuch a miſtreſs? — I could never, without indignation, hear it ſaid that "ſervants have no gratitude"—as if the condition of ſervitude excluded the virtues of humanity! — The truth is, maſters and miſtreſſes have ſeldom any real claim to gratitude. They think highly of what they beſtow,

beſtow, and little of the ſervice they receive: they conſider only their own convenience, and ſeldom reflect on the kind of life their ſervants paſs with them: they do not aſk themſelves, whether it is ſuch an one as is conſiſtent with the preſervation of their health, their morals, their leiſure for religious duties, or with a proper ſhare of the enjoyments and comforts of life. The diſſipated manners, which now ſo generally prevail, perpetual abſence from home, and attendance on aſſemblies or at public places, is, in all theſe reſpects, pernicious to the whole houſehold—and to the *men ſervants* abſolutely ruinous. Their only reſource, in the tedious hours of waiting, whilſt their maſters and ladies are engaged in diverſions, is to find out ſomething of the ſame kind for themſelves. Thus are they led into gaming, drinking, extravagance, and bad company—and thus, by a natural progreſſion, they become diſtreſt and diſhoneſt. That attachment and affiance, which ought to ſubſiſt between the dependant and his protector, are deſtroyed. The maſter looks on his attendants as thieves and traitors, whilſt they conſider him as one, whoſe money

only gives him power over them—and, who uſes that power, without the leaſt regard to their welfare.

* "The fool ſaith — I have no friends— "I have no thanks for all my good deeds, "and they that eat my bread ſpeak evil of "me." — Thus fooliſhly do thoſe complain, who chooſe their ſervants, as well as their friends, without diſcretion, or who treat them in a manner that no worthy perſon will bear.

I have been often ſhocked at the want of politeneſs, by which maſters and miſtreſſes ſometimes provoke impertinence from their ſervants: a gentleman, who would reſent to death, an imputation of falſehood from his equal, will not ſcruple, without proof, to accuſe his ſervant of it, in the groſſeſt terms. I have heard the moſt inſolent contempt of the whole claſs expreſſed at a table, whilſt five or ſix of them attended behind the chairs, who, the company ſeemed to think, were without ſenſes, without underſtanding, or the natural feelings of reſentment: theſe are cruel injuries and will be retorted in ſome way or other.

* Ecclus. xx. 16.

If

If you, my dear, live to be at the head of a family, I hope you will not only avoid all injurious treatment of your domeſtics, but behave to them with that courteſy and good-breeding, which will heighten their reſpect as well as their affection. If, on any occaſion, they do more than you have a right to require, give them, at leaſt, the reward of ſeeing that they have obliged you. If, in your ſervice, they have any hardſhip to endure, let them ſee that you are concerned for the neceſſity of impoſing it. When they are ſick, give them all the attention and every comfort in your power, with a free heart and kind countenance; "* not blemiſhing thy good deeds, "nor uſing uncomfortable words, when thou "giveſt any thing. Is not a word better than "a gift?—but both are with a gracious man! "—A fool will upbraid churliſhly, and a "gift of the envious conſumeth the eyes."

Whilſt you thus endear yourſelf to all your ſervants, you muſt ever carefully avoid making a favourite of any; unjuſt diſtinctions, and weak indulgencies to one, will of courſe ex-

* Ecclus. xviii.

cite

cite envy and hatred in the reſt. Your favourite may eſtabliſh whatever abuſes ſhe pleaſes; none will dare to complain againſt her, and you will be kept ignorant of her ill practices, but will feel the effects of them, by finding all your other ſervants uneaſy in their places, and, perhaps, by being obliged continually to change them.

When they have ſpent a reaſonable time in your ſervice, and have behaved commendably, you ought to prefer them, if it is in your power, or to recommend them to a better proviſion. The hope of this keeps alive attention and gratitude, and is the proper ſupport of induſtry. Like a parent, you ſhould keep in view their eſtabliſhment in ſome way, that may preſerve their old age from indigence; and, to this end, you ſhould endeavour to inſpire them with care to lay up part of their gains, and conſtantly diſcourage in them all vanity in dreſs and extravagance in idle expences. That you are bound to promote their eternal as well as temporal welfare, you cannot doubt, ſince, next to your children, they are your neareſt dependants. You ought

therefore

therefore to inſtruct them as far as you are able, furniſh them with good books ſuited to their capacity, and ſee that they attend the public worſhip of God: and you muſt take care ſo to paſs the ſabbath day as to allow them time, on that day at leaſt, for reading and reflection at home, as well as for attendance at church. Though this is a part of your religious duty, I mention it here, becauſe it is alſo a part of family management: for the ſame reaſon, I ſhall here take occaſion earneſtly to recommend family prayers, which are uſeful to all, but more particularly to ſervants—who, being conſtantly employed, are led to the neglect of private prayer—and whoſe ignorance makes it very difficult for them to frame devotions for themſelves, or to chooſe proper helps, amidſt the numerous books of ſuperſtitious or enthuſiaſtic nonſenſe, which are printed for that purpoſe. Even, in a political light, this practice is eligible, ſince the idea, which it will give them of your regularity and decency, if not counter-acted by other parts of your conduct, will probably increaſe their reſpect for you, and will be ſome reſtraint,

reſtraint, at leaſt on their outward behaviour, though it ſhould fail of that inward influence, which in general may be hoped from it.

The prudent diſtribution of your charitable gifts may not improperly be conſidered as a branch of Economy, ſince the great duty of almſgiving cannot be truly fulfilled without a diligent attention ſo to manage the ſums you can ſpare as to produce the moſt real good to your fellow-creatures. Many are willing to give money, who will not beſtow their time and conſideration, and who therefore often hurt the community, when they mean to do good to individuals. The larger are your funds, the ſtronger is the call upon you to exert your induſtry and care in diſpoſing of them properly. It ſeems impoſſible to give rules for this, as every caſe is attended with a variety of circumſtances which muſt all be conſidered. In general, charity is moſt uſeful, when it is appropriated to animate the induſtry of the young, to procure ſome eaſe and comforts to old age, and to ſupport in ſickneſs thoſe whoſe daily labour is their only maintenance in health. They, who are fallen into

indigence,

indigence, from circumſtances of eaſe and plenty, and in whom education and habit have added a thouſand wants to thoſe of nature, muſt be conſidered with the tendereſt ſympathy, by every feeling heart. It is needleſs to ſay that to ſuch the bare ſupport of exiſtence is ſcarcely a benefit—and that the delicacy and liberality of the manner, in which relief is here offered, can alone make it a real act of kindneſs. In great families, the waſte of proviſions, ſufficient for the ſupport of many poor ones, is a ſhocking abuſe of the gifts of Providence: Nor ſhould any lady think it beneath her to ſtudy the beſt means of preventing it, and of employing the refuſe of luxury in the relief of the poor. Even the ſmalleſt families may give ſome aſſiſtance in this way, if care is taken that nothing be waſted.

I am ſenſible, my dear child, that very little more can be gathered from what I have ſaid on Economy, than the general importance of it, which cannot be too much impreſſed on your mind, ſince the natural turn of young people is to neglect and even deſpiſe it; not diſtinguiſhing it from parſimony and narrowneſs of

ſpirit. But, be aſſured, my dear, there can be no true generoſity without it; and that the moſt enlarged and liberal mind will find itſelf not debaſed but ennobled by it. Nothing is more common than to ſee the ſame perſon, whoſe want of Economy is ruining his family, conſumed with regret and vexation at the effect of his profuſion; and, by endeavouring to ſave, in ſuch trifles as will not amount to twenty pounds in a year, that which he waſtes by hundreds, incur the character and ſuffer the anxieties of a miſer, together with the misfortunes of a prodigal. A rational plan of expence will ſave you from all theſe corroding cares, and will give you the full and liberal enjoyment of what you ſpend. An air of eaſe, of hoſpitality and frankneſs will reign in your houſe, which will make it pleaſant to your friends and to yourſelf. "Better is a morſel of bread," where this is found, than the moſt elaborate entertainment, with that air of conſtraint and anxiety, which often betrays the grudging heart through all the diſguiſes of civility.

That you, my dear, may unite in yourſelf the

the admirable virtues of Generoſity and Economy, which will be the grace and crown of all your attainments, is the earneſt wiſh of

Your ever affectionate.

LETTER VIII.

WHILST you labour to enrich your mind with the eſſential virtues of Chriſtianity—with piety, benevolence, meekneſs, humility, integrity, and purity—and to make yourſelf uſeful in domeſtic management, I would not have my dear child neglect to purſue thoſe graces and acquirements, which may ſet her virtue in the moſt advantageous light, adorn her manners, and enlarge her underſtanding: and this, not in the ſpirit of vanity, but in the innocent and laudable view of rendering herſelf more uſeful and pleaſing to her fellow-creatures, and conſequently more acceptable to God. Politeneſs of behaviour,

and the attainment of ſuch branches of knowledge and ſuch arts and accompliſhments as are proper to your ſex, capacity, and ſtation, will prove ſo valuable to yourſelf through life, and will make you ſo deſirable a companion, that the neglect of them may reaſonably be deemed a neglect of duty; ſince it is undoubtedly our duty to cultivate the powers entruſted to us, and to render ourſelves as perfect as we can.

You muſt have often obſerved that nothing is ſo ſtrong a recommendation on a ſlight acquaintance as *politeneſs*; nor does it loſe its value by time or intimacy, when preſerved, as it ought to be, in the neareſt connections and ſtricteſt friendſhips. This delightful qualification — ſo univerſally admired and reſpected, but ſo rarely poſſeſſed in any eminent degree —cannot but be a conſiderable object of my wiſhes for you: nor ſhould either of us be diſcouraged by the apprehenſion that neither I am capable of teaching, nor you of learning it, in *perfection* — ſince whatever degree you attain will amply reward our pains.

To be perfectly polite, one muſt have great

preſence

preſence of mind, with a delicate and quick *ſenſe of propriety*; or, in other words, one ſhould be able to form an inſtantaneous judgment of what is fitteſt to be ſaid or done, on every occaſion as it offers. I have known one or two perſons, who ſeemed to owe this advantage to nature only, and to have the peculiar happineſs of being born, as it were, with another ſenſe, by which they had an immediate perception of what was proper and improper, in caſes abſolutely new to them: but this is the lot of very few: In general, propriety of behaviour muſt be the fruit of inſtruction, of obſervation, and reaſoning; and is to be cultivated and improved like any other branch of knowledge or virtue. A good temper is a neceſſary groundwork of it; and, if to this is added a good underſtanding, applied induſtriouſly to this purpoſe, I think it can hardly fail of attaining all that is eſſential in it. Particular modes and ceremonies of behaviour vary in different countries, and even in different parts of the ſame town. Theſe can only be

learned by obſervation on the manners of thoſe who are beſt ſkilled in them, and by keeping what is called good company. But the principles of politeneſs are the ſame in all places. Wherever there are human beings, it muſt be impolite to hurt the temper or to ſhock the paſſions of thoſe you converſe with. It muſt every where be good-breeding, to ſet your companions in the moſt advantageous point of light, by giving each the opportunity of diſplaying their moſt agreeable talents, and by carefully avoiding all occaſions of expoſing their defects; — to exert your own endeavours to pleaſe, and to amuſe, but not to outſhine them; — to give each their due ſhare of attention and notice—not engroſſing the talk, when others are deſirous to ſpeak, nor, ſuffering the converſation to flag, for want of introducing ſomething to continue or renew a ſubject; — not to puſh your advantages in argument ſo far that your antagoniſt cannot retreat with honour: — In ſhort, it is an univerſal duty in ſociety to conſider others more than yourſelf — "in

"honour

" honour preferring one another." Chriſtianity, in this rule, gives the beſt leſſon of politeneſs; yet judgement muſt be uſed in the application of it: Our humility muſt not be ſtrained ſo far as to diſtreſs thoſe we mean to honour; we muſt not quit our proper rank, nor force others to treat us improperly; or to accept, what we mean as an advantage, againſt their wills.—We ſhould be perfectly eaſy, and make others ſo if we can. But, this happy eaſe belongs perhaps to the laſt ſtage of perfection in politeneſs, and can hardly be attained till we are conſcious that we know the rules of behaviour, and are not likely to offend againſt propriety. In a very young perſon, who has ſeen little or nothing of the world, this cannot be expected; but a real deſire of obliging, and a reſpectful attention, will in a great meaſure ſupply the want of knowledge, and will make every one ready to overlook thoſe deficiencies, which are owing only to the want of opportunities to obſerve the manners of polite company. You ought not

therefore to be too much depreſſed by the conſciouſneſs of ſuch deficiencies, but endeavour to get above the ſhame of wanting what you have not had the means of acquiring. Nothing heightens this falſe ſhame, and the awkwardneſs it occaſions, ſo much as vanity. The humble mind, contented to be known for what it is, and unembarraſſed by the dread of betraying its ignorance, is preſent to itſelf, and can command the uſe of underſtanding, which will generally preſerve you from any great indecorum, and will ſecure you from that ridicule, which is the puniſhment of affectation rather than of ignorance. People of ſenſe will never deſpiſe you, whilſt you act naturally; but, the moment you attempt to ſtep out of your own character, you make yourſelf an object of juſt ridicule.

Many are of opinion that a very young woman can hardly be too ſilent and reſerved in company; and certainly, nothing is ſo diſguſting in youth as pertneſs and ſelf-conceit. But, modeſty ſhould be diſtinguiſhed from

from an awkward baſhfulneſs, and ſilence ſhould only be enjoined, when it would be forward and impertinent to talk. There are many proper opportunities for a girl, young even as you are, to ſpeak in company, with advantage to herſelf; and, if ſhe does it without conceit or affectation, ſhe will always be more pleaſing than thoſe, who ſit like ſtatues, without ſenſe or motion. When you are ſilent, your looks ſhould ſhow your attention and preſence to the company: a reſpectful and earneſt attention is the moſt delicate kind of praiſe, and never fails to gratify and pleaſe. You muſt appear to be intereſted in what is ſaid, and endeavour to improve yourſelf by it: if you underſtand the ſubject well enough to aſk now and then a pertinent queſtion, or if you can mention any circumſtances relating to it that have not before been taken notice of, this will be an agreeable way of ſhowing your willingneſs to make a part of the company, and will probably draw a particular application to you, from ſome one or other.

Then, when called upon, you muſt not draw back as unwilling to anſwer, nor confine yourſelf merely to *yes* or *no*, as is the cuſtom of many young perſons, who become intolerable burthens to the miſtreſs of the houſe, whilſt ſhe ſtrives in vain to draw them into notice and to give them ſome ſhare in the converſation.

In your father's houſe it is certainly proper for you to pay civility to the gueſts, and to talk to them in your turn—with modeſty and reſpect—if they encourage you to it. Young ladies of near your own age, who viſit there, fall of courſe to your ſhare to entertain. But, whilſt you exert yourſelf to make their viſit agreeable to them, you muſt not forget what is due to the elder part of the company, nor, by whiſpering and laughing apart, give them cauſe to ſuſpect, what is too often true, that they themſelves are the ſubjects of your mirth. It is ſo ſhocking an outrage againſt ſociety, to talk of, or laugh at any perſon in his own preſence, that one would think it could only be committed

mitted by the vulgar. I am ſorry however to ſay, that I have too often obſerved it amongſt young ladies, who little deſerved that title whilſt they indulged their overflowing ſpirits, in defiance of decency and good-nature. The deſire of laughing will make ſuch inconſiderate young perſons find a ſubject of ridicule, even in the moſt reſpectable characters. Old age, which—if not diſgraced by vice or affectation—has the juſteſt title to reverence, will be mimicked and inſulted; and even, perſonal defects and infirmities will too often excite contempt and abuſe, inſtead of compaſſion. If you have ever been led into ſuch an action, my dear girl, call it ſeriouſly to mind, when you are confeſſing your faults to Almighty God: and, be fully perſuaded, that it is not one of the leaſt which you have to repent of. You will be immediately convinced of this, by comparing it with the great rule of juſtice, that of doing to all as you would they ſhould do unto you. No perſon living is inſenſible to the injury of contempt, nor is

there any talent ſo invidious, or ſo certain to create ill-will, as that of ridicule. The natural effects of years, which all hope to attain, and the infirmities of the body, which none can prevent, are ſurely of all others the moſt improper objects of mirth. There are ſubjects enough that are innocent, and on which you may freely indulge the vivacity of your ſpirits; for I would not condemn you to perpetual ſerioufneſs — on the contrary, I delight in a joyous temper, at all ages, and particularly at yours. Delicate and good-natured raillery amongſt equal friends, if pointed only againſt ſuch trifling errors as the owner can heartily join to laugh at, or ſuch qualities as they do not pique themſelves upon, is both agreeable and uſeful; but then it muſt be offered in perfect kindneſs and ſincere good humour; if tinctured with the leaſt degree of malice, its ſting becomes venomous and deteſtable. The perſon rallied ſhould have liberty and ability to return the jeſt, which muſt be dropped upon the firſt appearance of its affecting the temper.

You

You will wonder perhaps, when I tell you that there are ſome characters in the world, which I would freely allow you to laugh at—tho' not in their preſence. Extravagant vanity, and affectation, are the natural ſubjects of ridicule, which is their proper puniſhment. When you ſee old people, inſtead of maintaining the dignity of their years, ſtruggling againſt nature to conceal them, affecting the graces, and imitating the follies of youth — Or a young perſon aſſuming the importance and ſolemnity of old age—I do not wiſh you to be inſenſible to the ridicule of ſuch abſurd deviations from truth and nature. You are welcome to laugh, when you leave the company, provided you lay up a leſſon for yourſelf at the ſame time, and remember, that unleſs you improve your mind whilſt you are young, you alſo will be an inſignificant fool in old age—and that, if you are preſuming and arrogant in youth, you are as ridiculous as an old woman with a head-dreſs of flowers.

In a young lady's behaviour towards gentlemen, great delicacy is certainly required: yet, I believe, women oftener err from too great a conſciouſneſs of the ſuppoſed views of men than from inattention to thoſe views, or want of caution againſt them. You are at preſent rather too young to want rules on this ſubject; but I could wiſh that you ſhould behave almoſt in the ſame manner three years hence as now; and retain the ſimplicity and innocence of childhood, with the ſenſe and dignity of riper years. Men of looſe morals or impertinent behaviour muſt always be avoided: or, if at any time you are obliged to be in their company, you muſt keep them at a diſtance by cold civility. But, with regard to thoſe gentlemen, whom your parents think it proper for you to converſe with, and who give no offence by their own manners, to them I wiſh you to behave with the ſame frankneſs and ſimplicity as if they were of your own ſex. If you have natural modeſty, you will never tranſgreſs its bounds, whilſt you converſe

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with a man, as one rational creature with another, without any view to the poſſibility of a lover or admirer, where nothing of that kind is profeſt; where it is, I hope you will ever be equally a ſtranger to coquetry and prudery; and that you will be able to diſtinguiſh the effects of real eſteem and love from idle gallantry and unmeaning fine ſpeeches: the ſlighter notice you take of theſe laſt, the better; and that, rather with good-humour'd contempt than with affected gravity: but, the firſt muſt be treated with ſerioufneſs and well-bred ſincerity; not giving the leaſt encouragement, which you do not mean, nor aſſuming airs of contempt, where it is not deſerved. But this belongs to a ſubject, which I have touched upon in a former letter. I have already told you that you will be unſafe in every ſtep which leads to a ſerious attachment, unleſs you conſult your parents, from the firſt moment you apprehend any thing of that ſort to be intended: let them be your firſt confidants, and let every part of your conduct, in ſuch a caſe, be particularly directed by them.

With

With regard to accompliſhments, the chief of theſe is a competent ſhare of reading, well choſen and properly regulated; and of this I ſhall ſpeak more largely hereafter. Dancing and the knowledge of the French tongue are now ſo univerſal that they cannot be diſpenſed with in the education of a gentlewoman; and indeed they both are uſeful as well as ornamental; the firſt, by forming and ſtrengthening the body, and improving the carriage; the ſecond, by opening a large field of entertainment and improvement for the mind. I believe there are more agreeable books of female literature in French than in any other language; and, as they are not leſs commonly talked of than Engliſh books, you muſt often feel mortified in company, if you are too ignorant to read them. Italian would be eaſily learnt after French, and, if you have leiſure and opportunity, may be worth your gaining, though in your ſtation of life it is by no means neceſſary.

To write a free and legible hand, and to underſtand common arithmetic, are indiſpenſable requiſites.

As to muſic and drawing, I would only wiſh you to follow as Genius leads: you have ſome turn for the firſt, and I ſhould be ſorry to ſee you neglect a talent, which will at leaſt afford you an innocent amuſement, though it ſhould not enable you to give much pleaſure to your friends: I think the uſe of both theſe arts is more for yourſelf than for others: it is but ſeldom that a private perſon has leiſure or application enough to gain any high degree of excellence in them; and your own partial family are perhaps the only perſons who would not much rather be entertained by the performance of a profeſſor than by yours: but, with regard to yourſelf, it is of great conſequence to have the power of filling up agreeably thoſe intervals of time, which too often hang heavily on the hands of a woman, if her lot be caſt in a retired ſituation. Beſides this, it is certain that even a ſmall ſhare of knowledge in theſe arts will heighten your pleaſure in the performances of others: the taſte muſt be improved before it can be ſuſceptible of an exquiſite

reliſh for any of the imitative arts: An unſkilful ear is ſeldom capable of comprehending *Harmony*, or of diſtinguiſhing the moſt *delicate* charms of *Melody*. The pleaſure of ſeeing fine paintings, or even of contemplating the beauties of Nature, muſt be greatly heighten'd by our being converſant with the rules of drawing, and by the habit of conſidering the moſt picturesque objects. As I look upon taſte to be an ineſtimable fund of innocent delight, I wiſh you to loſe no opportunity of improving it, and of cultivating in yourſelf the reliſh of ſuch pleaſures as will not interfere with a rational ſcheme of life, nor lead you into diſſipation, with all its attendant evils of vanity and luxury.

As to the learned languages, though I reſpect the abilities and application of thoſe ladies, who have attained them, and who make a modeſt and proper uſe of them, yet I would by no means adviſe you — or any woman who is not ſtrongly impell'd by a particular genius—to engage in ſuch ſtudies. The labour and time which they require are

generally

generally incompatible with our natures and proper employments: the real knowledge which they ſupply is not eſſential, ſince the Engliſh, French, or Italian tongues afford tolerable tranſlations of all the moſt valuable productions of antiquity, beſides the multitude of original authors which they furniſh; and theſe are much more than ſufficient to ſtore your mind with as many ideas as you will know how to manage. The danger of pedantry and preſumption in a woman—of her exciting envy in one ſex and jealouſy in the other—of her exchanging the graces of imagination for the ſeverity and preciſeneſs of a ſcholar, would be, I own, ſufficient to frighten me from the ambition of ſeeing my girl remarkable for learning. Such objections are perhaps ſtill ſtronger with regard to the abſtruſe ſciences.

Whatever tends to embelliſh your fancy, to enlighten your underſtanding, and furniſh you with ideas to reflect upon when alone, or to converſe upon in company, is certainly well worth your acquiſition. The wretched

expedient, to which ignorance ſo often drives our ſex, of calling in ſlander to enliven the tedious inſipidity of converſation, would alone be a ſtrong reaſon for enriching your mind with innocent ſubjects of entertainment, which may render you a fit companion for perſons of ſenſe and knowledge, from whom you may reap the moſt deſirable improvements: for, though I think reading indiſpenſably neceſſary to the due cultivation of your mind, I prefer the converſation of ſuch perſons to every other method of inſtruction: but, this you cannot hope to enjoy, unleſs you qualify yourſelf to bear a part in ſuch ſociety, by, at leaſt, a moderate ſhare of reading.

Though *religion* is the moſt important of all your purſuits, there are not many *books* on that ſubject, which I ſhould recommend to you at preſent. Controverſy is wholly improper at your age, and it is alſo too ſoon for you to enquire into the evidence of the truth of revelation, or to ſtudy the difficult parts of ſcripture: when theſe ſhall come be-

fore

fore you, there are many excellent books, from which you may receive great aſſiſtance. At preſent, practical divinity — clear of ſuperſtition and enthuſiaſm, but addreſſed to the heart, and written with a warmth and ſpirit capable of exciting in it pure and rational piety — is what I wiſh you to meet with.

The principal ſtudy, I would recommend, is *hiſtory*. I know of nothing equally proper to entertain and improve at the ſame time, or that is ſo likely to form and ſtrengthen your judgment, and, by giving you a liberal and comprehenſive view of human nature, in ſome meaſure to ſupply the defect of that experience, which is uſually attained too late to be of much ſervice to us. Let me add, that more materials for converſation are ſupplied by this kind of knowledge, than by almoſt any other; but I have more to ſay to you on this ſubject in a future letter.

The faculty, in which women uſually moſt excel, is that of imagination; and, when properly cultivated, it becomes the ſource of

all that is moſt charming in ſociety. Nothing you can read will ſo much contribute to the improvement of this faculty as *poetry*; which, if applied to its true ends, adds a thouſand charms to thoſe ſentiments of religion, virtue, generoſity, and delicate tenderneſs, by which the human ſoul is exalted and refined. I hope, you are not deficient in natural taſte for this enchanting art, but that you will find it one of your greateſt pleaſures to be converſant with the beſt poets, whom our language can bring you acquainted with, particularly, thoſe immortal ornaments of our nation, *Shakeſpear* and *Milton*. The firſt is not only incomparably the nobleſt genius in dramatic poetry, but the greateſt maſter of nature, and the moſt perfect characteriſer of men and mahners: in this laſt point of view, I think him ineſtimable; and I am perſuaded that, in the courſe of your life, you will ſeldom find occaſion to correct thoſe obſervations on human nature, and thoſe principles of morality, which you may extract from his capital pieces. You will at firſt find his lan-

guage

guage difficult; but, if you take the aſſiſtance of a friend, who underſtands it well, you will by degrees enter into his manner of phraſeology, and perceive a thouſand beauties, which at firſt lay buried in obſolete words and uncouth conſtructions. The admirable *Eſſay on Shakeſpear*, which has lately appeared, ſo much to the honour of our ſex, will open your mind to the peculiar excellencies of this author, and enlighten your judgment on dramatic poetry in general, with ſuch force of reaſon and brilliancy of wit as cannot fail to delight as well as inſtruct you.

Our great Engliſh poet, Milton, is as far above my praiſe as his *Paradiſe Loſt* is above any thing which I am able to read, except the ſacred writers. The ſublimity of his ſubject ſometimes leads him into abſtruſeneſs; but many parts of his great poem are eaſy to all comprehenſions, and muſt find their way directly to every heart by the tenderneſs and delicacy of his ſentiments, in which he is not leſs ſtrikingly excellent than in the richneſs and ſublimity of his imagination. Ad-

diſon's criticiſm in the Spectators, written with that beauty, elegance, and judgment, which diſtinguiſh all his writings, will aſſiſt you to underſtand and to reliſh this poem.

It is needleſs to recommend to you the tranſlations of Homer and Virgil, which every body reads that reads at all. You muſt have heard that Homer is eſteemed the father of poetry, the original from whence all the moderns — not excepting Milton himſelf — borrow ſome of their greateſt beauties, and from whom they extract thoſe rules for compoſition, which are found moſt agreeable to nature and true taſte. Virgil, you know, is the next in rank amongſt the claſſics: You will read his Eneid with extreme pleaſure, if ever you are able to read Italian, in Annibal Caro's tranſlation; the idiom of the Latin and Italian languages being more alike, it is, I believe, much cloſer, yet preſerves more of the ſpirit of the original than the Engliſh tranſlations.

For the reſt, fame will point out to you the moſt conſiderable of our poets; and I would

would not exclude any of name, among thoſe whoſe morality is unexceptionable: but of poets, as of all other authors, I wiſh you to read only ſuch as are properly recommended to you — ſince there are many who debaſe their divine art, by abuſing it to the purpoſes of vice and impiety. If you could read poetry with a judicious friend, who would lead your judgment to a true diſcernment of its beauties and defects, it would inexpreſſibly heighten both your pleaſure and improvement. But, before you enter upon this, ſome acquaintance with the *Heathen Mythology* is neceſſary. I think that you muſt before now have met with ſome book under the title of *The Pantheon:* And, if once you know as much of the gods and goddeſſes as the moſt common books on the ſubject will tell you, the reſt may be learned by reading Homer: but then you muſt particularly attend to him in this view. I do not expect you to penetrate thoſe numerous myſteries—thoſe amazing depths of morality, religion, and metaphyſics—which ſome pretend to have diſcovered in his mythology, but, to know the names and principal offices

of the Gods and goddeſſes, with ſome idea of their moral meaning, ſeems requiſite to the underſtanding almoſt any poetical compoſition. As an inſtance of the *moral meaning* I ſpeak of, I will mention an obſervation of Boſſuet, That Homer's poetry was particularly recommended to the Greeks by the ſuperiority which he aſcribes to them over the Aſiatics; this ſuperiority is ſhewn in the Iliad, not only in the conqueſt of Aſia by the Greeks, and in the actual deſtruction of its capital, but in the diviſion and arrangement of the gods, who took part with the contending nations. On the ſide of Aſia was *Venus*—that is, ſenſual paſſion — pleaſure—and effeminacy. On the ſide of Greece was *Juno*—that is, matronly gravity and conjugal love; together with *Mercury*—invention and eloquence—and *Jupiter*—or political wiſdom. On the ſide of Aſia was *Mars*, who repreſents brutal valour and blind fury. On that of Greece was *Pallas*—that is military diſcipline, and bravery, guarded by judgment.

This, and many other inſtances that might be produced, will ſhew you how much of the beauty

beauty of the poet's art muſt be loſt to you, without ſome notion of theſe allegorical perſonages. Boys, in their ſchool-learning, have this kind of knowledge impreſſed on their minds by a variety of books; but women, who do not go through the ſame courſe of inſtruction, are very apt to forget what little they read or hear on the ſubject: — I adviſe you therefore never to loſe an opportunity of enquiring into the meaning of any thing you meet with in poetry, or in painting, alluding to the hiſtory of any of the heathen deities, and of obtaining from ſome friend an explanation of its connection with true hiſtory, or of its allegorical reference to morality or to phyſics.

Natural philoſophy, in the largeſt ſenſe of the expreſſion, is too wide a field for you to undertake; but, the ſtudy of nature, as far as may ſuit your powers and opportunities, you will find a moſt ſublime entertainment: the objects of this ſtudy are all the ſtupendous works of the Almighty Hand that lie within the reach of our obſervation. In the works of man perfection is aimed at, but, it can

only be found in thoſe of the Creator. The contemplation of perfection muſt produce delight, and every natural object around you would offer this delight, if it could attract your attention: if you ſurvey the earth, every leaf that trembles in the breeze, every blade of graſs beneath your feet is a wonder as abſolutely beyond the reach of human art to imitate as the conſtruction of the univerſe. Endleſs pleaſures to thoſe who have a taſte for them, might be derived from the endleſs variety to be found in the compoſition of this globe and its inhabitants. The foſſil—the vegetable—and the animal world—gradually riſing in the ſcale of excellence—the innumerable ſpecies of each, ſtill preſerving their ſpecific differences from age to age, yet of which no two individuals are ever perfectly alike—afford ſuch a range for obſervation and enquiry as might engroſs the whole term of our ſhort life if followed minutely. Beſides all the animal creation obvious to our unaſſiſted ſenſes, the eye, aided by philoſophical inventions, ſees myriads of creatures, which by the ignorant

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are not known to have exiſtence: it ſees all nature teem with life; every fluid—each part of every vegetable and animal—ſwarm with its peculiar inhabitants—inviſible to the naked eye, but as perfect in all their parts, and enjoying life as indiſputably, as the elephant or the whale.

But, if from the earth, and from theſe minute wonders, the philoſophic eye is raiſed towards the Heavens, what a ſtupendous ſcene there opens to it's view!—thoſe brilliant lights that ſparkle to the eye of ignorance as gems adorning the ſky, or as lamps to guide the traveller by night, aſſume an importance that amazes the underſtanding!—they appear to be *worlds*, formed like ours for a variety of inhabitants—or *ſuns*, enlightening numberleſs other worlds too diſtant for our diſcovery!—I ſhall ever remember the aſtoniſhment and rapture with which my mind received this idea, when I was about your age; it was then perfectly new to me, and it is impoſſible to deſcribe the ſenſations I felt from the glorious, boundleſs proſpect of infinite

nite beneficence burſting at once upon my imagination! — Who can contemplate ſuch a ſcene unmoved? — if your curioſity is excited to enter upon this noble enquiry, a few books on the ſubject, and thoſe of the eaſieſt ſort, with ſome of the common experiments, may be ſufficient for your purpoſe—which is to enlarge your mind, and to excite in it the moſt ardent gratitude and profound adoration towards that great and good Being, who exerts his boundleſs power in communicating various portions of happineſs through all the immenſe regions of creation.

Moral philoſophy, as it relates to human actions, is of ſtill higher importance than the ſtudy of nature. The works of the ancients on this ſubject are univerſally ſaid to be entertaining as well as inſtructive, by thoſe who can read them in their original languages; and ſuch of them as are well tranſlated will undoubtedly, ſome years hence, afford you great pleaſure and improvement. You will alſo find many agreeable and uſeful books, written originally in French, and in Engliſh,

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on morals and manners: for the preſent, there are works, which, without aſſuming the ſolemn air of philoſophy, will enlighten your mind on theſe ſubjects, and introduce inſtruction in an eaſier dreſs: of this ſort are many of the moral eſſays, that have appeared in periodical papers—which, when excellent in their kind—as are the *Spectators*, *Guardians*, *Ramblers*, and *Adventurers*—are particularly uſeful to young people, as they comprehend a great variety of ſubjects—introduce many ideas and obſervations that are new to them—and lead to a habit of reflecting on the characters and events that come before them in real life, which I conſider as the beſt exerciſe of the underſtanding.

Books on taſte and criticiſm will hereafter be more proper for you than at preſent: whatever can improve your diſcernment, and render your taſte elegant and juſt, muſt be of great conſequence to your enjoyments as well as to the embelliſhment of your underſtanding.

I would by no means exclude the kind of

reading, which young people are naturally moſt fond of; though I think the greateſt care ſhould be taken in the choice of thoſe *fictitious ſtories*, that ſo enchant the mind—moſt of which tend to inflame the paſſions of youth, whilſt the chief purpoſe of education ſhould be to moderate and reſtrain them. Add to this, that both the writing and ſentiments of moſt novels and romances are ſuch as are only proper to vitiate your ſtyle, and to miſlead your heart and underſtanding. The expectation of extraordinary adventures—which ſeldom ever happen to the ſober and prudent part of mankind — and the admiration of extravagant paſſions and abſurd conduct, are ſome of the uſual fruits of this kind of reading; which when a young woman makes it her chief amuſement, generally renders her ridiculous in converſation, and miſerably wrong-headed in her purſuits and behaviour. There are however works of this claſs, in which excellent morality is joined with the moſt lively pictures of the human mind, and with all that can entertain the imagination

and

and intereſt the heart. But, I muſt repeatedly exhort you, never to read any thing of the ſentimental kind, without taking the judgment of your beſt friends in the choice; for, I am perſuaded, that the indiſcriminate reading of ſuch kind of books corrupts more female hearts than any other cauſe whatſoever.

Before I cloſe this correſpondence, I ſhall point out the courſe of hiſtory I wiſh you to purſue, and give you my thoughts of geography and chronology, ſome knowledge of both being, in my opinion, neceſſary to the reading of hiſtory with any advantage.

I am, my deareſt Niece,

your ever affectionate.

LET-

LETTER IX.

MY DEAR NIECE,

I HAVE told you that you will not be able to read hiſtory, with much pleaſure or advantage, without ſome little knowledge of *Geography* and *Chronology*. They are both very eaſily attained — I mean in the degree that will be neceſſary for you. You muſt be ſenſible that you can know but little of a country, whoſe ſituation with reſpect to the reſt of the world you are entirely ignorant of — and that, it is to little purpoſe that you are able to mention a fact, if you cannot nearly aſcertain the *time* in which it happened, which alone, in many caſes, gives importance to the fact itſelf.

In Geography — the eaſieſt of all ſciences, and the beſt adapted to the capacity of children — I ſuppoſe you to have made ſome beginning; to know at leaſt the figure of the earth — the ſuppoſed lines — the degrees — how to meaſure

meaſure diſtances—and a few of the common terms: If you do not already know theſe, two or three leſſons will be ſufficient to attain them: the reſt is the work of memory, and is eaſily gained by reading with maps; for I do not wiſh your knowledge to be exact and maſterly — but ſuch only as is neceſſary for the purpoſe of underſtanding hiſtory, and, without which, even a news-paper would be unintelligible. It may be ſufficient for this end, if, with reſpect to *ancient* Geography, you have a general idea of the ſituation of all the great ſtates, without being able preciſely to aſcertain their limits. But, in the *modern*, you ought to know the bounds and extent of every ſtate in Europe, and its ſituation with reſpect to the reſt. The other parts of the world will require leſs accurate knowledge, except with regard to the European ſettlements.

It may be an uſeful and agreeable method, when you learn the ſituation of any important country, to join with that knowledge ſome one or two leading facts or circumſtances

ces concerning it, ſo that its particular property may always put you in mind of the ſituation, and the ſituation, in like manner, recall the particular property. When, for inſtance, you learn in what part of the globe to find Ethiopia, to be told at the ſame time that, in that vaſt unknown tract of country, the Chriſtian religion was once the religion of the ſtate, would be of ſervice — becauſe the geographical and hiſtorical knowledge would aſſiſt each other. Thus, to join with Egypt, *the nurſe and parent of arts and of ſuperſtition* —with Perſia, *ſhocking deſpotiſm and perpetual revolutions*—with ancient Greece, *freedom and genius*—with Scythia, *hardineſs and conqueſt*, are hints which you may make uſe of as you pleaſe. Perhaps annexing to any country the idea of ſome familiar form which it moſt reſembles may at firſt aſſiſt you to retain a general notion of it; thus Italy has been called a *boot* — and Europe compared to a *woman ſitting*.

The difference of the ancient and modern names of places is ſomewhat perplexing; the moſt

moſt important ſhould be known by both names at the ſame time, and you muſt endeavour to fix a few of thoſe which are of moſt conſequence ſo ſtrongly in your mind, by thinking of them, and being often told of them, that the ancient name ſhall always call up the modern one to your memory, and the modern the ancient: Such as the Ægean Sea, now *The Archipelago*—The Peloponneſus, now *The Morea*—Crete, *Candia*—Gaul, *France*—Babylon, *Bagdat*—Byzantium—to which the Romans tranſplanted their ſeat of empire—*Conſtantinople*, &c.

There have been ſo many ingenious contrivances to make Geography eaſy and amuſing, that I cannot hope to add any thing of much ſervice; I would only prevail with you not to neglect acquiring, by whatever method pleaſes you beſt, that ſhare of knowledge in it, which you will find neceſſary, and which is ſo eaſily attained; and I intreat that you would learn it in ſuch a manner as to fix it in your mind, ſo that it may not be loſt and forgotten among other childiſh ac-

quiſitions, but that it may remain ready for uſe through the reſt of your life.

Chronology indeed has more of difficulty; but, if you do not bewilder yourſelf by attempting to learn too much and too minutely at firſt, you need not deſpair of gaining enough for the purpoſe of reading hiſtory with pleaſure and utility.

Chronology may be naturally divided into three parts, *the Ancient*—*the Middle*—and *the Modern.*—With reſpect to all theſe, the beſt direction that can be given is to fix on ſome periods or epochas, which, by being often mentioned and thought of, explained and referred to, will at laſt be ſo deeply engraven on the memory, that they will be ready to preſent themſelves whenever you call for them: theſe indeed ſhould be few, and ought to be well choſen for their importance, ſince they are to ſerve as elevated ſtations to the mind, from which it may look backwards and forwards upon a great variety of facts.

Till your more learned friends ſhall ſupply you with better, I will take the liberty to recommend

recommend the following, which I have found of ſervice to myſelf.

In the ancient chronology, you will find there were four thouſand years from the creation to the redemption of man — and that Noah and his family were miraculouſly preſerved in the ark 1650 years after Adam's creation.

As there is no hiſtory, except that in the Bible, of any thing before the flood, we may ſet out from that great event, which happened, as I have ſaid above, in the year of the world 1650.

The 2350 years, which paſſed from the deluge to our Saviour's birth, may be thus divided.—There have been four ſucceſſive *Empires* called *Univerſal*, becauſe they extended over a great part of the then known world—theſe are uſually diſtinguiſhed by the name of *The Four great Monarchies:* the three firſt of them are included in ancient Chronology, and begun and ended in the following manner:

1ſt, THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE, founded by

Nimrod in the year of the world 1800, ended under Sardanapalus in 3250, endured 1450 years.

The Median—though not accounted one of the four great monarchies, being conqueſts of rebels on the Aſſyrian empire—comes in here for about 200 years.

2d, THE PERSIAN EMPIRE, which began under Cyrus, in the year of the world 3450, ended in Darius in 3670, before Chriſt 330, laſted a little more than 200 years.

3d, THE GRECIAN EMPIRE, begun under Alexander the Great in 3670, was ſoon after his death diſmembered by his ſucceſſors, but the different parcels into which they divided it were poſſeſſed by their reſpective families, till the famous Cleopatra, the laſt of the race of Ptolemy, one of Alexander's captains who reigned in Egypt, was conquered by Julius Ceſar, about half a century before our Lord's birth, which is a term of about 300 years.

Thus you ſee that from the deluge to the eſtabliſhment of the firſt great monarchy—

the

the Aſſyrian—is - - - - - -	150 years
The Aſſyrian empire continued	1450
The Median - - - - - - -	200
The Perſian - - - - - - -	200
The Grecian - - - - - - -	300
From Julius Ceſar, with whom began the fourth great monarchy — viz. the Roman — to Chriſt - - - - - - - -	50
In all - -	2350 years.

The term from the deluge to Chriſt.

I do not give you theſe dates and periods as correctly true, for I have taken only round numbers as more eaſily retained by the memory; ſo that when you come to conſult chronological books or tables, you will find variances of ſome years between them and the above accounts; but preciſe exactneſs is not material to a beginner.

I offer this ſhort table as a little ſpecimen of what you may eaſily do for yourſelf; but even this ſketch, ſlight as it is, will give you a general notion of the ancient hiſtory of the

world, from the deluge to the birth of Chriſt.

Within this period flouriſhed the Grecian and Roman republics, with the hiſtory and chronology of which it will be expected you ſhould be tolerably well acquainted; and indeed you will find nothing in the records of mankind ſo entertaining. Greece was divided into many petty ſtates, whoſe various revolutions and annals you can never hope diſtinctly to remember; you are therefore to conſider them as forming together one great kingdom — like the Germanic body, or the united provinces — compoſed ſeparately of different governments, but ſometimes acting with united force for their common intereſt. The *Lacedemonian* government, formed by Lycurgus in the year of the world 3100— and the *Athenian*, regulated by Solon about the year 3440 — will chiefly engage your attention.

In purſuing the *Grecian* chronology, you need only perhaps make one ſtand or Epocha — at the time of *Socrates*, that wiſeſt of philoſophers,

philoſophers, whom you muſt have heard of—who lived about 3570 years from the creation, and about 430 before Chriſt: for within the term of 150 years *before* Socrates, and 200 *after* him, will fall in moſt of the great events and illuſtrious characters of the Grecian hiſtory.

I muſt inform you that the Grecian method of dating time was by *Olympiads*—that is four compleat years—ſo call'd from the celebration, every fifth year, of the Olympic Games, which were conteſts in all the manly exerciſes, ſuch as wreſtling—boxing—running—chariot-racing, &c.—They were inſtituted in honour of Jupiter, and took their name from Olympia, a city of Elis, near which they were performed: they were attended by all ranks of people, from every ſtate in Greece; the nobleſt youths were eager to obtain the prize of victory, which was no other than an olive crown, but eſteem'd the moſt diſtinguiſhing ornament. Theſe games continued all the time that Greece retain'd any ſpark of liberty;

and with them begin the authentic hiſtory of that country—all before being conſider'd as fabulous. You muſt therefore endeavour to remember that they began in the year of the world 3228 — after the flood 1570 years—after the deſtruction of Troy 400——before the building of Rome 23—before Cyrus about 200 — and 770 before Chriſt. If you cannot retain *all* theſe dates, at leaſt you muſt not fail to remember the near coincidence of the firſt *Olympiad* with the *building of Rome*, which is of great conſequence, becauſe, as the Grecians reckoned time by Olympiads, the Romans dated from the building of their city: and as theſe two Eras are within 23 years of each other, you may, for the eaſe of memory, ſuppoſe them to begin together, in the year of the world 3228.

In reading the hiſtory of the *Roman Republic* — which continued in that form of government to the time of Julius Ceſar's dictatorſhip, about the year of the world 3960, and about 48 years before Chriſt—

you

you will make as many epochas as you ſhall find convenient: I will mention only two —the ſacking of Rome by the Gauls, which happen'd in the year of the world 3620— in the 365th year of the city—in the 97th Olympiad—before Chriſt 385—and about 30 years before the birth of Alexander. The ſecond epocha may be the 608th year of the city—when, after three obſtinate wars, Carthage was deſtroyed, and Rome was left without a rival.

Perhaps the following bad verſes, which were given me when I was young, may help to fix in your mind the important Eras of the Roman and Grecian dates:—You muſt not laugh at them, for chronologers do not pique themſelves on their Poetry, but they make uſe of numbers and rhymes merely as aſſiſtants to memory, being ſo eaſily learn'd by heart.

" Rome and Olympiads bear the ſame date,
" Three thouſand two hundred and twenty-
" eight.

" In

" In * three hundred and ſixty was Rome
" ſack'd and torn,
" Thirty ſummers before Alexander was
" born."

You will allow that what I have ſaid in theſe few pages is very eaſily learn'd—yet, little as it is, I will venture to ſay that, was you as perfectly miſtreſs of it as of your alphabet, you might anſwer ſeveral queſtions relating to ancient Chronology more readily than many who pretend to know ſomething of this ſcience. One is not ſo much required to tell the preciſe year, in which a great man lived, as to know with whom he was cotemporary in other parts of the world. —I would know then, from the ſlight ſketch above given, about what year of the Roman republic Alexander the Great lived.—You would quickly run over in your mind, " Alexander lived in the 3670th year of " the world — 330 before Chriſt — conſe- " quently he muſt have flouriſhed about the " 400*th of Rome*, which had endured 750 years

* That is, in the 365th year of the city.

" when

"when Chriſt was born." Or, ſuppoſe it was aſked, what was the condition of Greece, at the time of the ſacking of Rome by the Gauls; had any particular ſtate, or the united body, choſen then to take advantage of the misfortunes of the Romans?—You conſider that the 365th year of the city—the date of that event—is 385 before Chriſt; conſequently this muſt have happened about the time of Philip of Macedon, father of Alexander, when the Grecians under ſuch a leader, might have extirpated the Roman nation from the earth, had they ever heard of them, or thought the conqueſt of them an object worthy their ambition.

Numberleſs queſtions might be anſwered in like manner, even on this very narrow circumſcribed plan, if it was completely maſtered. I might require that other periods or epochas ſhould be learned with the ſame exactneſs—but theſe may ſerve to explain my meaning, and to ſhew you how practicable and eaſy it is. One thing, however, I muſt obſerve — though perhaps it is ſufficiently obvious—

obvious—which is, that you can make no uſe of this ſketch of ancient Chronology, nor even hope to retain it, till you have read the ancient *hiſtory*. When you have gone through Rollin's Hiſtoire Ancienne *once*, then will be the time to fix the ancient Chronology deep in your mind, which will very much enhance the pleaſure and uſe of reading it a *ſecond* time; for you muſt remember that nobody reads a hiſtory to much purpoſe, who does not go over it more than once.

When you have got through your courſe of ancient hiſtory, and are come to the more modern, you muſt then have recourſe to the ſecond of the three diviſions — viz. *middle Chronology*; containing about 800 years, from the birth of our Lord, and from within 50 years of the riſe of the Roman empire, to Charlemagne, who died in 814.

This period, except in the earlieſt part of it, is too much involved in obſcurity to require a very minute knowledge of its hiſtory—it may be ſufficient to fix two or three

of

of the moſt ſingular circumſtances, by their proper dates.

The firſt epocha to be obſerved is the year of our Lord 330—when Conſtantine, the firſt Chriſtian emperor, who reſtored peace to the oppreſſed and perſecuted church, removed the ſeat of empire from Rome to Byzantium, called afterwards from him Conſtantinople. After his time—about the year 400—began thoſe irruptions of the Goths and Vandals, and other northern nations, who ſettled themſelves all over the weſtern parts of the Roman empire, and laid the foundation of the ſeveral ſtates which now ſubſiſt in Europe.

The next epocha is the year 622 — for the eaſe of memory ſay 600—when Mahomet, by his ſucceſsful impoſture, became the founder of the Saracen empire, which his followers extended over a great part of Aſia and Africa, and over ſome provinces of Europe.—At the ſame time, St. Gregory, biſhop of Rome, began to aſſume a ſpiritual power, which grew by degrees into that abſolute and

and enormous dominion, ſo long maintained by the popes over the greateſt part of Chriſtendom. St. Auguſtine—a miſſionary from St. Gregory — about this time, began the converſion of Great Britain to Chriſtianity

The third and concluding epocha in this diviſion is the year 800; when Charlemagne, king of France — after having ſubdued the Saxons, repreſſed the Saracens, and eſtabliſhed the temporal dominion of the pope by a grant of conſiderable territories—was elected emperor of the weſt and protector of the church. The date of this event correſponds with that remarkable period of our Engliſh hiſtory — the union of the Heptarchy — or Seven kingdoms—under Egbert.

As to the *third* part of Chronology—namely the *Modern*, I ſhall ſpare you and myſelf all trouble about it at preſent; for, if you follow the courſe of reading which I ſhall recommend, it will be ſome years before you reach modern hiſtory—and, when you do, you will eaſily make periods for yourſelf, if you do but remember carefully to examine the dates as

you read, and to impreſs on your memory thoſe of very remarkable reigns or events.

I fear you are by this time tired of Chronology; but, my ſole intention in what I have ſaid is to convince you that it is a ſcience not out of your reach, in the moderate degree that is requiſite for you: *the laſt volume of the Ancient Univerſal Hiſtory* is the beſt Engliſh Chronological work I know; if that does not come in your way, there is an excellent French one, called Tablettes Chronologiques de l'Hiſtoire Univerſelle, Du Freſnoy, 3 tomes, Paris: there is alſo a *chart* of univerſal hiſtory, including Chronology —and a *Biographical* chart — both by Prieſtly —which you may find of ſervice to you.

Indeed, my dear, a woman makes a poor figure who affects, as I have heard ſome ladies do, to diſclaim all knowledge of times and dates: the ſtrange confuſion they make of events, which happened in different periods, and the ſtare of ignorance when ſuch are referred to as are commonly known, are ſufficiently pitiable: but the higheſt mark of folly

folly is to be proud of ſuch ignorance—a reſource, in which ſome of our ſex find great conſolation.

Adieu, my dear child!—I am, with the tendereſt affection,

ever yours.

LETTER X.

MY DEAR NIECE,

WHEN I recommend to you to gain ſome inſight into the general hiſtory of the world, perhaps you will think I propoſe a formidable taſk; but, your apprehenſions will vaniſh, when you conſider that of near half the globe we have no hiſtories at all;—that, of other parts of it, a few facts only are known to us—and that, even of thoſe nations, which make the greateſt figure in hiſtory, the early ages are involved in obſcurity and fable: it is not indeed allowable

to

to be totally ignorant even of thoſe fables, becauſe they are the frequent ſubjects of poetry and painting, and are often referred to in more authentic hiſtories.

The firſt recorders of actions are generally poets: in the hiſtorical ſongs of the bards are found the only accounts of the firſt ages of every ſtate; but in theſe we muſt naturally expect to find truth mixed with fiction, and often diſguiſed in allegory. In ſuch early times, before ſcience has enlightened the minds of men, the people are ready to believe every thing — and the hiſtorian, having no reſtraints from the fear of contradiction or criticiſm, delivers the moſt improbable and abſurd tales as an account of the lives and actions of their forefathers: thus the firſt heroes of every nation are gods, or the ſons of gods; and every great event is accompanied with ſome ſupernatural agency. Homer, whom I have already mentioned as a poet, you will find the moſt agreeable hiſtorian of the early ages of Greece — and Virgil will ſhew you the

ſuppoſed origin of the Carthaginians and Romans.

It will be neceſſary for you to obſerve ſome regular plan in your hiſtorical ſtudies, which can never be purſued with advantage otherwiſe than in a continued ſeries. I do not mean to confine you ſolely to that kind of reading—on the contrary, I wiſh you frequently to relax with poetry or ſome other amuſement, whilſt you are purſuing your courſe of hiſtory; I only mean to warn you againſt mixing *ancient* hiſtory with *modern*, or *general* hiſtories of one place with *particular reigns* in another—by which deſultory manner of reading, many people diſtract and confound their memories, and retain nothing to any purpoſe from ſuch a confuſed maſs of materials.

The moſt ancient of all hiſtories, you will read in your Bible: from thence you will proceed to l'Hiſtoire Ancienne of Rollin, who very ingeniouſly points out the connection of prophane with ſacred hiſtory, and enlivens his narrative with many agreeable

and improving reflections—and many very pleaſing detached ſtories and anecdotes, which may ſerve you as reſting-places in your journey. It would be an uſeful exerciſe of your memory and judgment, to recount theſe intereſting paſſages to a friend, either by letter or in converſation; not in the words of the author, but in your own natural ſtyle—by memory, and not by book; and to add whatever remarks may occur to you. I need not ſay that you will pleaſe me much, whenever you are diſpoſed to make this uſe of *me*.

The want of memory is a great diſcouragement in hiſtorical purſuits, and is what every body complains of. Many artificial helps have been invented, of which, thoſe who have tried them can beſt tell you the effects: but the moſt natural and pleaſant expedient is that of converſation with a friend, who is acquainted with the hiſtory which you are reading. By ſuch converſations, you will find out how much is uſually retained of what is read, and you will learn to ſelect

thoſe characters and facts which are beſt worth preſerving: for, it is by trying to remember every thing without diſtinction, that young people are ſo apt to loſe every trace of what they read. By repeating to your friend what you can recollect, you will fix it in your memory; and, if you ſhould omit any ſtriking particular, which ought to be retained, that friend will remind you of it, and will direct your attention to it on a ſecond peruſal. It is a good rule, to caſt your eye each day over what you read the day before, and to look over the contents of every book when you have finiſhed it.

Rollin's work takes in a large compaſs—but, of all the ancient nations it treats of, perhaps there are only the Grecians and Romans, whoſe ſtories ought to be read with any anxious deſire of retaining them perfectly: for the reſt—ſuch as the Aſſyrians, Egyptians, &c.—I believe, you would find, on examination, that moſt of thoſe, who are ſuppoſed tolerably well read in hiſtory, remember no more than a few of the moſt remarkable

remarkable facts and characters. I tell you this to prevent your being diſcouraged on finding ſo little remain in your mind after reading theſe leſs intereſting parts of ancient hiſtory.

But, when you come to the Grecian and Roman ſtories, I expect to find you deeply intereſted and highly entertained; and, of conſequence, eager to treaſure up in your memory thoſe heroic actions and exalted characters, by which a young mind is naturally ſo much animated and impreſſed. As Greece and Rome were diſtinguiſhed as much for genius as valour, and were the theatres, not only of the greateſt military actions—the nobleſt efforts of liberty and patriotiſm—but of the higheſt perfection of arts and ſciences, their immortal fame is a ſubject of wonder and emulation, even to theſe diſtant ages; and, it is thought a ſhameful degree of ignorance, even in our ſex, to be unacquainted with the nature and revolutions of their governments, and with the characters and ſtories of their moſt illuſ-

trious heroes.—Perhaps, when you are told that the government and the national character of your own countrymen have been compared with thoſe of the Romans, it may not be an uſeleſs amuſement, in reading the Roman Hiſtory, to carry this obſervation in your mind, and to examine how far the parallel holds good. The French have been thought to reſemble the Athenians in their genius, though not in their love of liberty. Theſe little hints ſometimes ſerve to awaken reflection and attention in young readers—I leave you to make what uſe of them you pleaſe.

When you have got through Rollin, if you add *Vertot's Revolutions Romaines*—a ſhort, and very entertaining work—you may be ſaid to have read as much as is *abſolutely neceſſary* of ancient hiſtory. Plutarch's Lives of famous Greeks and Romans—a book deſervedly of the higheſt reputation—can never be read to ſo much advantage as immediately after the hiſtories of Greece and Rome: I ſhould even prefer reading each

life

life in Plutarch, immediately after the hiſtory of each particular Hero, as you meet with them in Rollin or in Vertot.

If hereafter you ſhould chooſe to enlarge your plan, and ſhould wiſh to know more of any particular people or period than you find in Rollin, the ſources from which he drew may be open to you—for there are, I believe, French or Engliſh tranſlations of all the original hiſtorians, from whom he extracted his materials.

Crevier's continuation of Rollin, I believe, gives the beſt account of the Roman emperors down to Conſtantine. What ſhocking inſtances, will you there meet with, of the terrible effects of lawleſs power on the human mind!—How will you be amazed to ſee the moſt promiſing characters changed by flattery and ſelf-indulgence into monſters that diſgrace humanity!—To read a ſeries of ſuch lives as thoſe of Tiberius, Nero, or Domitian, would be intolerable, were we not conſoled by the view of thoſe excellent emperors, who remained uncorrupted through

all temptations. When the mind—diſguſted, depreſſed, and terrified — turns from the contemplation of thoſe depths of vice, to which the human nature may be ſunk, a Titus, the delight of mankind—a Trajan —an Antoninus—reſtore it to an exulting ſenſe of the dignity, to which that nature may be exalted by virtue. Nothing is more awful than this conſideration: a human creature given up to vice is infinitely below the moſt abject brute: the ſame creature, trained by virtue to the utmoſt perfection of his nature, is "but a little lower than the "angels, and is crowned with glory and "immortality."

Before you enter upon the modern hiſtory of any particular kingdom, it will be proper to gain ſome idea of that interval between ancient and modern times, which is juſtly called the dark and barbarous ages — and which laſted from Conſtantine to Charlemagne — perhaps one might ſay to ſome centuries after. On the irruption of the northern Barbarians, who broke the

Roman

Roman empire, and diſſipated all the treaſures of knowledge, as well as of riches, which had been ſo long accumulating in that enormous ſtate, the European world may be ſaid to have returned to a ſecond infancy; and the Monkiſh legends, which are the only records preſerved of the times in which they were written, are not leſs fabulous than the tales of the demi-gods. I muſt profeſs myſelf ignorant how to direct you to any diſtinct or amuſing knowledge of the hiſtory of Europe during this period: —ſome collect it from *Puffendorf's Introduction*—ſome from *The Univerſal Hiſtory*—and now, perhaps, with more advantage and delight, from the firſt volume of *Robertſon's Charles the Fifth*, in which he traces the progreſs of civilization, government, and arts, from the firſt ſettlements of the Barbarians; and ſhews the foundation of the ſeveral ſtates, into which Europe is now divided, and of thoſe laws, cuſtoms, and politics, which prevail in this quarter of the world.

In

In theſe dark ages, you will find no ſingle character ſo intereſting as that of Mahomet — that bold impoſtor, who extended his uſurped dominion equally over the minds and properties of men, and propagated a new religion, whilſt he founded a new empire, over a large portion of the globe. His life has been written by various hands.

When you come to the particular hiſtories of the European ſtates, your own country ſeems to demand the precedence; and, there is no part more commodious to ſet out from, ſince you cannot learn the hiſtory of Great Britain, without becoming in ſome degree acquainted with almoſt every neighbouring nation, and without finding your curioſity excited to know more of thoſe, with whom we are moſt connected.

By the amazing progreſs of navigation and commerce, within the laſt two or three centuries, all parts of the world are now connected: the moſt diſtant people are become well acquainted, who, for thouſands of years, never heard of one another's exiſtence:

iſtence: we are ſtill every day exploring new regions — and every day ſee greater reaſon to expect that immenſe countries may yet be diſcovered, and America no longer retain the name of the *New World.* You may paſs to every quarter of the earth, and find yourſelf ſtill in the Britiſh dominion; this iſland, in which we live, is the leaſt portion of it; and, if we were to adopt the ſtyle of ancient conquerors, we might call it the throne, from which we rule the world. To this boaſt we are better entitled than ſome of thoſe who formerly called themſelves *Maſters of the Globe*, as we poſſeſs an empire of greater extent, and, from the ſuperior advantages of our commerce, much greater power and riches: — but we have now too many rivals in dominion, to take upon us ſuch haughty titles.

You cannot be ſaid to know the hiſtory of that empire, of which you are a ſubject, without knowing ſomething of the Eaſt and Weſt Indies, where ſo great a part of it is ſituated: and you will find the accounts of the

the diſcovery and conqueſt of America very entertaining, tho' you will be ſhocked at the injuſtice and cruelty of its conquerors. But, with which of the glorious conquerors of mankind muſt not humanity be ſhocked! —Ambition, the moſt remorſeleſs of all paſſions, purſues its object by all ſorts of means: juſtice, mercy, truth, and every thing moſt ſacred, in vain oppoſe its progreſs!—alas, my dear, ſhall I venture to tell you that the hiſtory of the world is little elſe than a ſhocking account of the wickedneſs and folly of the ambitious! — The world has ever been, and, I ſuppoſe, ever muſt be, governed and inſulted by theſe aſpiring ſpirits—it has always, in a greater or leſs degree, groaned under their unjuſt uſurpation.

But let not the horror of ſuch a ſcene put a ſtop to your curioſity: it is proper you ſhould know mankind as they are: You muſt be acquainted with the heroes of the earth, and perhaps you may be too well reconciled to them: Mankind have in general a ſtrong

a ſtrong bias in their favour; we ſee them ſurrounded with pomp and ſplendour—every thing that relates to them has an air of grandeur—and, whilſt we admire their natural powers, we are too apt to pardon the deteſtable abuſe of them, to the injury and ruin of the human race. We are dazzled with falſe glory, and willingly give into the deluſion;—for mighty conqueſts, like great conflagrations, have ſomething of the ſublime that pleaſes the imagination, though we know, if we reflect at all, that the conſequences of them are devaſtation and miſery.

The Weſtern and Eaſtern world will preſent to you very different proſpects. In *America*, the firſt European conquerors found nature in great ſimplicity; ſociety ſtill in its infancy—and conſequently the arts and ſciences yet unknown: ſo that the facility, with which they overpowered theſe poor innocent people, was intirely owing to their ſuperior knowledge in the arts of deſtroying. They found the inhabitants brave enthuſi-

aſtic

aſtic patriots, but without either the military or political arts neceſſary for their defence. The two great kingdoms of Mexico and Peru had alone made ſome progreſs in civilization; they were both formed into regular ſtates, and had gained ſome order and diſcipline: from theſe therefore the Spaniards met with ſomething like an oppoſition. At firſt indeed the invaders appeared ſupernatural beings, who came upon them flying over the ocean, on the wings of the wind, and who, mounted on fiery animals, unknown in that country, attacked them with thunder and lightning in their hands —for ſuch the fire-arms of the Spaniards appeared to this aſtoniſhed people. But, from being worſhipped as gods, they ſoon came to be feared as evil ſpirits; and in time being diſcovered to be men—different from the Americans only in their outrageous injuſtice, and in the cruel arts of deſtroying—they were abhorred and boldly oppoſed. The reſiſtance however of a million of theſe poor naked people, deſperately croud-

ing

ing on each other to deſtruction, ſerved only to make their ruin more complete. The Europeans have deſtroyed, with the moſt ſhocking barbarity, many millions of the original inhabitants of theſe countries, and have ever ſince been depopulating Europe and Africa to ſupply their places.

Though our own countrymen have no reaſon to boaſt of the juſtice and humanity of their proceedings in America, yet, in compariſon with thoſe of the Spaniards, our poſſeſſions there were innocently acquired. Some of them were gained by conqueſt, or ceſſion, from Spain and from other European powers—Some by contract with the natives, or by ſettlements on uninhabited lands. We are now poſſeſſed of a ſeries of colonies, extending above two thouſand miles along the whole Eaſtern coaſt of North America, beſides many iſlands of immenſe value. Theſe countries, inſtead of being thinly peopled by a few hords of ignorant ſavages, are now adorned with many great cities, and innumerable rich plantations, which have

have made ample returns to their mother country, for the dangers and expences which attended their firſt eſtabliſhment. Bleſt with more natural advantages than almoſt any country in the world, they are making a ſwift progreſs in wealth and grandeur, and ſeem likely, in ſome future period, to be as much the ſeat of empire and of ſcience as Europe is at preſent. Whether their attainments in virtue and happineſs will keep pace with their advancement in knowledge, wealth, and power, is much to be queſtioned; for you will obſerve, in your hiſtorical view of the ſeveral great empires of the world, that as each grew up towards the higheſt pitch of greatneſs, the ſeeds of deſtruction grew up with it; luxury and vice, by debaſing the minds, and enervating the bodies of the people, left them all, in their turns, an eaſy prey to poorer and more valiant nations.

In the Eaſt, the Europeans introduced themſelves in a milder way: admitted firſt as traders—and, for the more commodious carrying

carrying on their commerce, indulged by the powers of the country, in eſtabliſhing a few ſmall factories—they by gentle degrees extended and ſtrengthened their ſettlements there, till their force became conſiderable enough to be thought an uſeful auxiliary to contending princes; and—as it has often happened to thoſe who have called in foreign powers to interfere in their domeſtic contentions—by availing themſelves of the diſturbances of a diſmembered monarchy, they at length raiſed a power, almoſt independant of their employers. Soon, the ſeveral European nations, who had thus got footing in the Indies, jealous of each other's growing greatneſs, made the feuds of the native princes ſubſervient to their mutual conteſts—till within a few years, the Engliſh, by a happy concurrence of circumſtances, obtained the maſtery, and expelled their rivals from all their conſiderable ſettlements.

The rapidity of our conqueſts here has been perhaps equal to that of the firſt invaders of America—but from different cauſes.

Here we found an old eſtabliſhed empire advanced to its criſis; the magnificence and luxury of the great carried to the higheſt exceſs—and the people in a proportionable degree of oppreſſion and debaſement. Thus ripe for deſtruction, the rivalſhips of the viceroys, from the weakneſs of the government, become independant ſovereigns—and the daſtardly ſpirit of the meaner people—indifferent to the cauſe for which they were compelled to fight—encouraged theſe ambitious merchants to puſh their advantages farther than they could at firſt have ſuppoſed poſſible: with aſtoniſhment they ſaw the intrepid leaders of a few hundreds of brave free Britons boldly oppoſe and repeatedly put to flight millions of theſe effeminate Indian ſlaves—and, in a ſhort time, raiſe for them an empire much larger than their Mother Country.

From theſe remote quarters of the world, let us now return to Great Britain, with the hiſtory of which you ought certainly to acquaint yourſelf, before you enter upon that

of any other European kingdom. If you have courage and induſtry enough to begin ſo high as the invaſion of Julius Cæſar—before which nothing is known of the inhabitants of this iſland—you may ſet out with Rapin, and proceed with him to William the Conqueror. From this era there are other hiſtories of England more entertaining than his, tho', I believe, none eſteemed more authentic. Party ſo ſtrongly influences both hiſtorians and their readers, that it is a difficult and invidious taſk to point out the *beſt* amongſt the number of Engliſh hiſtories that offer themſelves: but, as *you* will not read with a critical view, nor enter deeply into politics, I think you may be allowed to chooſe that which is moſt entertaining; and, in this view, I believe the general voice will direct you to Hume, tho' he goes no farther than the Revolution. Among other *hiſtorians*, do not forget my darling *Shakeſpear*—a faithful as well as a moſt agreeable one—whoſe hiſtorical plays, if read in a ſeries, will fix in your memory the reigns he has

choſen, more durably than any other hiſtory. You need not fear his leading you into any material miſtakes, for he keeps ſurpriſingly cloſe to the truth, as well in the characters as in the events. One cannot but wiſh he had given us a play on the reign of every Engliſh King—as it would have been the pleaſanteſt, and perhaps the moſt uſeful way of becoming acquainted with it.

For the other portion of Great Britain, Robertſon's Hiſtory of Scotland is a delightful work, and of a moderate ſize.

Next to your own country, *France* will be the moſt intereſting object of your enquiries; our ancient poſſeſſions in that country, and the frequent conteſts we have been engaged in with its inhabitants, connect their hiſtory with our own. The extent of their dominion and influence—their ſuppoſed ſuperiority in elegance and politeneſs—their eminence in the Arts and Sciences—and that intercourſe of thought, if I may ſo call it, which ſubſiſts between us, by the mutual communication of literary productions—make

them

them peculiarly intereſting to us; and we cannot but find our curioſity excited to know their ſtory, and to be intimately acquainted with the character, genius, and ſentiments of this nation.

I do not know of any general hiſtory of France that will anſwer your purpoſe except that of *Mezerai*, which, even in the abridgement, is a pretty large work; there is a very modern one by *Velly, and others*, which perhaps may be more lively, but is ſtill more voluminous, and not yet compleated. From Mezerai, you may proceed with Voltaire to the end of the reign of Louis the Fourteenth.

In conſidering the reſt of Europe, your curioſity may be confined within narrower limits. Modern hiſtory is, from the nature of it, much more minute and laborious than the ancient—and to purſue that of ſo many various kingdoms and governments would be a taſk unequal to your leiſure and abilities, at leaſt for ſeveral years to come; at the ſame time, it muſt be owned that the preſent ſyſtem of politics and commerce has

formed ſuch a relation between the different powers of Europe, that they are in a manner members of one great body, and a total ignorance of any conſiderable ſtate would throw an obſcurity even upon the affairs of your own country: an acquaintance however with the moſt remarkable circumſtances, that diſtinguiſh the principal governments, will ſufficiently enlighten you, and will enable you to comprehend whatever relates to them, in the hiſtories with which you are more familiar. Inſtead of referring you for this purpoſe to dull and unintereſting abridgements, I chooſe rather to point out to you a few ſmall Tracts, which exhibit ſtriking and lively pictures, not eaſily effaced from the memory, of the conſtitutions and the moſt remarkable tranſactions of ſeveral of theſe nations. Such are

Sir William Temple's Eſſay on the United Provinces.

His Eſſay on Heroic Virtue, which contains ſome account of the Saracen Empire.

Vertot's

Vertot's Revolutions de Suede.

——— ——— ——— de Portugal.

Voltaire's Charles 12 de Suede.

——— ——— Pierre le Grand.

Puffendorf's Account of the Popes, in his Introduction to Modern History.

Some part of the History of Germany and Spain, you will see more in detail in Robertson's History of Charles the Vth, which I have already recommended to you, in another view.

After all this, you may still be at a loss for the transactions of Europe, in the last fifty years; for the purpose of giving you, in a very small compass, some idea of the state of affairs during that period, I will venture to recommend one book more — *Campbell's State of Europe.*

Thus much may suffice for that moderate scheme, which I think is best suited to your sex and age. There are several excellent histories, and memoirs of particular reigns and periods, which I have taken no notice of in this circumscribed plan—but, with which,

if you ſhould happen to have a taſte for the ſtudy, you will hereafter chooſe to be acquainted: theſe will be read with moſt advantage, after you have gained ſome general view of hiſtory—and they will then ſerve to refreſh your memory, and ſettle your ideas diſtinctly, as well as enable you to compare different accounts of the perſons and facts which they treat of, and to form your opinions of them on juſt grounds.

As I cannot, with certainty, foreſee what degree of application or genius for ſuch purſuits you will be miſtreſs of, I ſhall leave the deficiencies of this collection to be ſupplied by the ſuggeſtions of your more informed friends—who, if you explain to them how far you wiſh to extend your knowledge, will direct you to the proper books.

But if, inſtead of an eager deſire for this kind of knowledge, you ſhould happen to feel that diſtaſte for it, which is too common in young ladies, who have been indulged in reading only works of mere amuſement, you will perhaps rather think that I want

mercy

mercy in offering you ſo large a plan, than that there needs an apology for the deficiencies of it: but, comfort yourſelf with the aſſurance that a taſte for hiſtory will grow and improve by reading: that as you get acquainted with one period or nation, your curioſity cannot fail to be awakened for what concerns thoſe immediately connected with it; and thus, you will inſenſibly be led on, from one degree of knowledge to another.

If you waſte in trivial amuſement the next three or four years of your life, which are the prime ſeaſon of improvement, believe me, you will hereafter bitterly regret their loſs: when you come to feel yourſelf inferior in knowledge to almoſt every one you converſe with—and, above all, if you ſhould ever be a mother, when you feel your own inability to direct and aſſiſt the purſuits of your children—you will then find ignorance a ſevere mortification and a real evil. Let this, my dear, animate your induſtry—and let not a modeſt opinion of your own capacity

pacity be a diſcouragement to your endeavours after knowledge; a moderate underſtanding, with diligent and well directed application, will go much farther than a more lively genius, if attended with that impatience and inattention, which too often accompanies quick parts. It is not from want of capacity that ſo many women are ſuch trifling inſipid companions—ſo ill qualified for the friendſhip and converſation of a ſenſible man—or for the taſk of governing and inſtructing a family; it is much oftener from the neglect of exerciſing the talents, which they really have, and from omitting to cultivate a taſte for intellectual improvement: by this neglect, they loſe the ſincereſt of pleaſures; a pleaſure, which would remain when almoſt every other forſakes them —which neither fortune nor age can deprive them of—and which would be a comfort and reſource in almoſt every poſſible ſituation of life.

If I can but inſpire you, my dear child, with the deſire of making the moſt of your time

time and abilities, my end is anſwered; the means of knowledge will eaſily be found by thoſe who diligently ſeek them — and they will find their labours abundantly rewarded.

And now, my dear, I think it is time to finiſh this long correſpondence — which, though in ſome parts it may have been tedious to you, will not, I hope, be found entirely uſeleſs in any. I have laid before you all that my matureſt reflections could enable me to ſuggeſt, for the direction of your conduct through life. My love for you, my deareſt child, extends its views beyond this frail and tranſitory exiſtence; it conſiders you as a candidate for immortality—as entering the liſts for the prize of your high calling—as contending for a crown of unfading glory. It ſees, with anxious ſolicitude, the dangers that ſurround you, and the everlaſting ſhame that muſt follow, if you do not exert all your ſtrength in the conflict. Religion therefore has been the baſis of my plan—the principle, to which every

every other purſuit is ultimately referred. Here then I have endeavoured to guide your reſearches; and to aſſiſt you in forming juſt notions on a ſubject of ſuch infinite importance, I have ſhewn you the neceſſity of regulating your heart and temper, according to the genuine ſpirit of that religion, which I have ſo earneſtly recommended as the great rule of your life. To the ſame principle, I would refer your attention to domeſtic duties—and, even that refinement and elegance of manners, and all thoſe graces and accompliſhments, which will ſet your virtues in the faireſt light, and will engage the affection and reſpect of all who converſe with you. — Endeared to Society by theſe amiable qualities, your influence in it will be more extenſive, and your capacity of being uſeful proportionably enlarged. The ſtudies, which I have recommended to you, muſt be likewiſe ſubſervient to the ſame views: the purſuit of knowledge, when it is guided and controul'd by the principles I have eſtabliſh'd, will conduce to many valuable ends:

the

the habit of induſtry, it will give you—the nobler kind of friendſhips, for which it will qualify you, and its tendency to promote a candid and liberal way of thinking, are obvious advantages. I might add, that a mind well informed in the various purſuits which intereſt mankind and the influence of ſuch purſuits on their happineſs, will embrace, with a clearer choice, and will more ſteadily adhere to, thoſe principles of Virtue and Religion, which the judgement muſt ever approve, in proportion as it becomes enlighten'd.

May thoſe delightful hopes be anſwered which have animated my heart, while with diligent attention I have endeavoured to apply to your advantage all that my own experience and beſt obſervation could furniſh. With what joy ſhould I ſee my deareſt girl ſhine forth a bright example of every thing that is amiable and praiſe-worthy! — and how ſweet would be the reflection that I had, in any degree, contributed to make her ſo!—My heart expands with the affecting

fecting thought, and pours forth in this adieu the moſt ardent wiſhes for your perfection! If the tender ſolicitude expreſs'd for your welfare by this "labour of love" can engage your gratitude, you will always remember how deeply your conduct intereſts the happineſs of

Your moſt affectionate Aunt.

THE END.

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